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**Gendered Constructions of the Nation: Race, Sex
and Class in 'White Mothers' accounts of
Belonging**

**A thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Sian Elesabeth Peer
Middlesex University
February 2012**

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I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Abstract

This thesis offers a detailed exploration of what it means to be living as a white mother of a 'mixed race' child in England during the period 1930-2010. Using primary data, I piece together a story about a nation and the women who are seen to move beyond its boundaries through sexually and racially transgressive acts. I select seven official documents for analysis from public archives spanning the 1930-1950s and position these as representative of an official response to boundary incursion. Using those materials, I demonstrate the reassertion of state authority, as rules and social practices including social distancing and marginalization to secure boundaries. I examine how particular tropes of gender, sexuality, class and ethnicity, provided a rich harvest for discursive constructions of white mothering as degraded whiteness and/or Englishness. I then re-examine 'crossings' as gendered dimensions of movement in relation to a collective with implications for becoming, belonging and non belonging. This allows me reframe meanings and experiences of white mothering as the impact of border interaction.

The research design was influenced by feminisms, an overarching body of work that adopts a gendered gaze whilst rendering different social divisions and sources of power visible. Using that framework, I examine the presence and participation of white mothers as construction sites and agents of construction in the making and marking of national boundaries (Anthias & Yuval Davies 1992). I use this logic to reason that white mothers remain anchored within the collective through legitimate and authentic means. White mothers continue to symbolise and signify national boundaries, but there is disagreement as to what those boundaries constitute and where they should be located. Indeed, using the narratives of thirty white British women, I catalogue the complex web of tender ties that sustain belongings. In intimate spaces, borders have not necessarily been crossed and boundaries have not necessarily collapsed but are conjoined in ways that have not been explored. My contribution to research in this field is to demonstrate how white mothering embodies elements of change and continuity that stretch and pull the nation's boundaries in unexplored ways. I examine these ideas as intersecting social dimensions to reveal new identity possibilities and secure belongings. Likewise, I claim a particular vantage point for white mothers where location and perspective are shaped by their ability to straddle both positions, as well as occupy construction sites where distance has collapsed.

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Chapter 1: The Whiteness of White mothering

Experience

I begin this chapter by recounting my personal interest in mixedness before moving onto discuss why I felt it was important to identify a specifically British focus for the research. Beyond my private life, encounters with mixedness developed through project work with mixed race young people in 2000. I undertook qualitative research for a Local Authority where a significant proportion of casework involved young people of mixed race. The research neatly aligned with calls from social welfare practitioners and educationalists for better information about how to work with this 'group'. *'Negotiating Identity'* (Peer 2000) highlighted issues of importance to young people of mixed race, yet pointed out discrepancies between the assumptions and realities of how they lived their lives. During fieldwork their white mothers touched on a number of issues that warranted further enquiry but these were outside the scope of the project plan. I wanted to respond to some of their unease, to explore the racialised encounters they experienced within education, health and social care settings.

As Byrne (2006, 2006a) has discussed, engagement with public institutions and local social networks intensifies for mothers of young children suggesting the practice of motherhood marks identity transformation. In discussions with white mothers I identified two broad areas of concern that connected to wider discursive fields. On the one hand they disclosed pressure to identify their children as Black. Professionals assumed that mixed race young people were confused about who they were, that they suffered from low levels of self esteem and lacked confidence. Those 'concerns' were used to persuade mothers of the need for 'identity work'. A second concern was closely associated with ethnic minority underachievement and disengagement. Tensions centred on values that set white mothers' principles and morals apart from the professional value base they encountered. Despite a groundswell of interest I could not remember reading any articles that integrated white mothers views as knowing subjects, or contributed their words to revise or enhance discussions. This void indicates a complexity surrounding mixedness and nuanced understandings still to be worked through.

Demographic Data

As Tizzard & Phoenix (2002:2) observe, our image of mixedness appears to remain relatively unchanged. What has changed is the proportion of the population identified as mixed race. If we think of mixed race as a developing

ethnic category they are identified as one of the fastest growing and youngest population concentrations in British society. Mixed race young people constitute 26.2% of all Black and minority ethnic children under the age of five (Aspinall 2009, Owen 2007:8). The trajectories for British interracial marriage and cohabitation suggest that, in the very near future, mixed race children will outnumber mono-racial Black children (Edwards & Cabballero 2008:43). Scholars tracking the conceptualisation and categorisation of 'mixed race' chart a shift in attitudes pre and post 2001. It is most likely that this follows the introduction of 'mixed race' as an ethnic category in the UK Census (Aspinall 2009, 2010, Owen 2001, 2007). This inclusion charts movement away from anecdotal and ad hoc interest towards a more outcome-focused and detailed consideration of mixed race as a statistical reality.

Emerging research is beginning to touch on new patterns in behaviours, exploring how mixed race young people respond to the chances and opportunities made available to them. Nonetheless, research tends to emerge within public institutions and reflects, at some level, concern with immigration, inclusion and exclusion. What circulates are hard hitting research trajectories indicating poor achievement, high rates of school exclusions and over-representation in the care system for white/African and white/African Caribbean children (Tickly, Caballero, Haynes & Hill 2004). Somewhat problematically is the potential for multiple connections and disconnections across other dimensions to become overlooked. In my view, the current debate subsumes a range of cross cutting issues within a rather singular category of ethnic complexity. By failing to pay sufficient attention to the multiple and densely layered belongings hosted by the category 'mixed', we have been blind to the significance of gender and class as factors that shape experience. It is my belief that white women have a crucial role to play in developing more nuanced understandings and in shaping future debate.

A British Focus

A number of British scholars suggest that racialised research methodologies remain a contested and uncomfortable arena for British academics (Ali 2003:473, Gunaratnam 2003). In 'doing raced research' academic concerns centre on the objectification of Black men, or in failing to acknowledge Blackness at all. Gunaratnam (2003) tackles a number of these issues in her critique of research methodologies that 'reified race' or adopt a 'colour blind approach'. It was important that I demonstrate the importance of race in white mother's lives, yet equally acknowledge that race represents a partial account of mixedness. One of the ways in which scholars have addressed these tensions is to be mindful of

'race' as a slippery and sticky concept. I grappled with this tension throughout the project constantly questioning the significance and meaninglessness of racial difference in white mothers' lives.

For a number of scholars the instability of racial categories leads to flawed research methodologies and undermines scientific demands for robustness in research practice (Ali 2003, 2006, Frankenberg 2004). In my case, concerned as I am with capturing dimensions of difference, I counter pose postmodern approaches centred on fluidity, against influential American research methodologies that tend to favour quantitative approaches and re-establish the 'facts of race'. The latter quantifies racial difference and measures racial attitudes, arguably to such a degree, that it assumes far greater significance than other dimensions of difference (Cooney & Radina 2000, Ferber 1998, Lipsitz 1998, Zack 1995). Published works by American 'bi-racial' authors who ultimately find their Black identity, alongside, or in spite of, their white mothers, feed into the idea that race is real (Hodes 1997, McBride 1997, Root 1997). At one level I was concerned with understanding the theoretical basis for making such claims. I felt strongly that an approach to reflect on the specific historical, cultural and political contexts that shape this nation was required.

Despite operating as 'white noise' British interracial intimacies do not feature as a significant driver for academic attention and are often dismissed as an unnecessary diversion (Jenkinson 1996, 1998). May & Cohen (1974) are relatively alone in their positioning of interracial intimacies as a touch paper for the racial conflict that periodically erupted in urban areas in the interwar period. They claim this omission blurs a complex interaction between race and Colonialism. Bland (2005), who is equally concerned with shifting social relations, illustrates a general fear of race mixing followed the Great War. On one level miscegenation threatened feminine respectability and was managed by marking out women who balked at the imposition of social norms, as deviant (Bynum 1992, Lawless 1995). However, I suggest a number of overlapping discourses factor here. One is overt government policy aimed at quantifying the size and impact of in-migration on a British populace. A second is a tendency to read white women as degraded, which brings sexual relations, gender and Imperialism under the spotlight (Strobel 1978). A third, and arguably covert policy field, reflects mounting anxiety within British government as to what made Black settlement desirable and achievable (Tabili 2006:172).

Adopting a policy framework provides an important anchor for research in areas where there is so much complexity (Bulmer 2004, Yuval Davis 2005). Indeed,

interracial relationships themselves can take many forms, yet I have chosen to focus on one particular configuration. I argue the specificity of relationships between white women and Black African or Caribbean men provides coherence across policy documents, academic research and with the literature review. Kenneth Little's (1947) early ethnographic study on the development of Black British populations was followed by a succession of influential reports: *The British Coloured* (Collins 1952), *The Coloured Quarter* (Banton 1955), *Newcomers* (Glass 1967) and *Dark Strangers* (Patterson 1964). The focus for research tends towards an examination of the economic challenges faced by Black migrant families taking up residency in the United Kingdom and references a strong likelihood that they will need support from public agencies in meeting their distinct needs.

During that time authors were concerned with newness as a site of tension for host communities. Cultural disjuncture occupied a particular place in marking out the limitations of the nation and in identifying categories of citizenship. A policy discourse about migrant experiences presupposed 'excessive numbers' of migrants, regardless of actual population profiles, would sustain rigid racial, social and cultural barriers in host countries, or, contradictorily, unsettle local social relations who challenged where those boundaries were drawn. As Tabili (2006, 2008) rightly identifies, practice is often indeterminate or contested. The processes that shaped a Black presence in Britain rendered it problematical on account of harsh economic conditions but similarly drew on cultural constructions to reflect a position of national subordination (Tabili 2006). Significantly, demographic data demonstrates that white mothers formed part of the new 'coloured communities', in that in migration reflected a particular gendered profile in favour of Black males (Webster 1998). What must be acknowledged is how whiteness retained a significant presence in 'coloured communities'. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 4 of this thesis.

Susan Benson's (1981) study marked a shift away from researching 'minority ethnic communities' to focus on the insular social networks of a small group of interracial families living in Brixton. By mapping complex sexual and social relationships she concluded that mixed race families withdrew into small worlds and operated within similar social networks. The isolation of mixed race families emerged as a factor of local social relations confronted by the challenge of integration and assimilation. I suggest that what is significant about this research is that it reflects a turning point and departure. Mixed households were re-positioned outside of the Black communities they were instrumental in shaping and re-imagined as marginal to both majority and minority communities.

Anne Wilson (1981,1987) shifts our attention again by focusing on mixed race identity as opposed to the goings on in 'coloured households'. Her priority was to focus on language use in the complex process of racialised identity construction. In her study, language meaning and language use mark disjuncture between ascribed and claimed identities and between individuals within families and communities. Individual preferences, used interchangeably to convey distinctive and ambiguous meanings, were just as likely to be inflected with visible difference, radicalisation and politics, or a partner's value base. In pursuing these findings, Wilson (1981,1987) begins to question the validity of a dichotomous racial categorisation process suggesting, that in part, language use shifted in relation to the context under discussion. It was imprecise, contradictory and confusing. Mothers were '*surprised at the complexity*' of language and '*amused at its inconsistency and confusion*' (Wilson 1987:121). But an equally important finding was to point out significant challenges in understanding the meanings attached to racialised terminology. Given that re-classification occurs across time and place a somewhat controversial relationship exists between language and its use, particularly if language is being used to explore identity conflict (Back 1995).

More recently, Tizzard & Phoenix (2002) interrogated language as a critical interface with modes of identification, but shifted attention away from professionals to focus on the voices of mixed race young people. In pursuing these concerns they identify a paradigm shift in the construction of identity. Scholars embrace the notion of multiple as opposed to fixed identities. They also acknowledge how new possibilities mark a return to bi polar thinking matched by a growth in Black political consciousness. Bulmer (2004) suggests race is always political and controversial and so to distinguish a mixed race experience from a Black experience will have its critics. I reason the identification of mixed race boys as Black is perhaps one example of this (Sewell 1999). The challenge for me is that white mothers were foundational to the development of Black British communities, yet understanding their role in shaping a British mixed race experience remains unnoticed.

Class is an equally under-acknowledged dimension of this debate. In coining the phrase '*women of a very low class*' Tabili (2006) expressed how interracial relationships provoked deeply gendered and classed based judgements, most provocatively in relation to interracial marriage. Assertions were cast regarding the characteristics of women prepared to entertain interracial intimacy. As active participants white women were denounced in gendered and class specific terms

(Bynum 1992, Callaway 1997). Tabili (2006) goes on to illustrate how fundamental the management of sexual activity and control of private lives was to state formation and social stratification throughout Imperial rule. Maternalism and respectability were densely woven into specific English class and gender constructs. To add to this complexity Byrne (2006) frames motherhood itself as an essentially classed based activity, a fusion of middle class whiteness with the practice of motherhood. For Duncan (2005) class based differences in motherhood need to be explained in terms of cultural constructions. His research indicates working class mothers may be more concerned with developing survival skills in children, whereas middle class mothers promote individualism. I use this research to illustrate how complex interrelations of gender, race and class mark interracial relationships in inconsistent ways and propose these remain relatively unexamined.

The question of parenting

In the following section I focus on parenting as one particular area of research that has consistently attracted the attention of public agencies and academia. Parenting support has carved out a significant role as a high profile public service intervention. As Song (2008) demonstrates, *'common sense tells us that parents do influence their children's sense of identity but we don't know how much difference this may make'*. (Song 2008:8). I argue that a tightly interlaced discourse of visible difference, class, mothering and sexual morality, frames white mothers characteristics as a constraining influence and negative factor in their children's lives. Despite a shaky evidence base constructions of mixed race children being 'at risk' have assumed a significant position within academic writing and policy documents. The trope of inadequate parenting has a strong presence in discussions by social commentators and social welfare practitioners alike (Barns 2006, Cheetham & Small 1986, Rowe & Lambert 1974). This is a model of parenting deficit, which positions Black males as absent fathers and questions the legitimacy of white birth mothers as adequate parents for 'Black children' (Harman 2009, Prevatt Goldstein 1999, Sewell 2000). Most significantly is the theorisation of a child's racial identity development and later life experience as a site of tension and difficulty for white mothers. These central ideas forge links between psychological approaches to identity formation and socialisation practices in the home (Banks 1996, Barns 2006, Harman 2009).

Elsewhere, I have cautioned against framing white mothers as disruptive identities in marginal locations, similarly disconnected from white, Black and minority ethnic communities. Many of these concerns can be traced though history and are rooted in Eugenicist claims of racial and cultural decay (Flemming

1930, Lee 1960). 'Hybridity' remains a pervasive discursive undercurrent in the archival material I analyse in Chapter 4. Dominant theories present 'children of mixed blood' as alienated or in 'no mans land'. For a number of authors, this theory appears to have its roots in Stonequist's (1937) influential theorisation of culture conflict and marginality. Scholars researching the experience of Black children in Care (CIC) and Transracial Adoption (TRA) reflect similar concerns. The appropriateness of 'white homes' for 'Black children' and the need for Black children to develop 'survival strategies' remains highly contentious (Dale 1987, Kirton 2000, Rowe & Lambert 1973, Tizzard & Phoenix 2002). In the United Kingdom, there has been a reluctance to legislate at the national level, favouring practice based decisions at a local level. This has paved the way for individuals to shape and influence local placement policies (Small 1984, 1991).

Contemporary studies contain similarly strong currents of thought often meshing together a number of overlapping concerns and vulnerabilities. If there is limited security in adopting an English/British identity for children of migrant families how can we explain a similar position for mixed race children of white British mothers? White mothers are considered a detrimental force, as constructing barriers to secure identities, emotional wellbeing and positive self-esteem. Despite the acknowledgement here that white mothers play a central role in the construction of social identities, there is a lack of understanding about their motivations or explanatory frameworks. What role does whiteness play? In each case, whiteness appears to be positioned as a damaging threat to mixed children's psychological well-being (Banks 1996, Rainier 2006). A recent report by the Multiple Heritage Service makes a number of these points through an evaluation of a mentoring project (Phillips 2008). Having a white mother is considered a factor in the high rates of mixed race children in the care system due to familial breakdown, a factor also underpinning school attainment profiles and exclusion rates.

I reason the risk of 'non belonging' remains an influential start point for social welfare practitioners moving into the field of mixedness. On the ground, these approaches do not always connect with identity politics as a contested arena within academia. As Anthias (2006) suggests, theoretical approaches conflate dimensions of belonging with dimensions of identity. Certainly, in the research I consulted there is a tendency to analyse fixed elements of identity over attachments or belongings. Banks (1996) reasons how the psychological dynamics and social pressures faced by lone white mothers are exposed in dialogue. His sample contained notably high rates of dysfunctionality and mental health stress. Summarising he concludes that lacking in their own sense of

identity, mothers were ineffective vehicles to transmit a secure identity to their children. Barns (2008) equally examined the experience, in her case linked to socioeconomic status, of lone white mothers with mixed race children in London. She identifies limited social support networks and racism in operation. Finally, Harman (2009) discussed exposure to racism in her sample of lone mothers, cautioning social workers to be conscious of the effect of social disapproval. So, research to date presents white mothering as a universal, isolating and marginal experience.

In terms of racial politics Song (2008) acknowledges the inclusion of 'mixed race' to the British Census 2001 may have been welcomed, but marks a return to biological constructions of racial difference and categorical thinking. There are strong links here to the work of Anthias (2006) who argues that validation is central to an identification process. This is compelling in terms of mixedness precisely because of its contradictory connotations. The validity of a mixed race identity has developed into pro race and post race camps (Edwards & Caballero 2008). 'Pro race' camps express concern with the appropriateness of a mixed 'homespace' and with how well transracial parents can accommodate Black children's racial identity and cultural needs. Twine (2004) reflects this type of research, in her exploration of 'racial literacy' and the production of an appropriate ethno cultural context. This term is used to explain consciousness as a form of white parental labour in the development of cultural competencies. There are clear limitations in arguing for one set of cultural conditions in place of another. The 'Post race' camp views mixedness in more positive terms but still questions how parents can meaningfully acknowledge their child's total heritage (Edwards & Caballero 2008, Aspinall 2003).

An important driver for my research is to expose an overlapping set of discursive representations that seem to position the difficulties experienced by mixed race young people as the households they inhabit. I pursue these ideas to challenge a class based discourse of motherhood which calls individual mothering practices to account, without re-focusing attention on the underlying processes that constitute mixedness as a disorderly space. I am particularly concerned where those constructions influence and shape how public agencies interact with mixed race families. As Stoler (2001) demonstrates, under colonial relations domestic arrangements the management of sex and affective ties meshed together public and private spheres. I claim that to focus on mixedness is to demonstrate the conjoined and uncategorical nature of those dimensions. These connections are deeply woven into the fabric of social structure but in ways that are difficult to disentangle.

Research Aims

My central research goal is to interrogate *what it means to be a white mother of a mixed race child in Britain*. In the following section, I outline a set of research objectives that are concerned with understanding the role of intersubjective relations in social theory and in testing the assumptions behind common place understandings and shared value systems (Filmer et al 1998:29). Thumim (1995:62) described what is common as, '*things so well known that they don't need to be spoken, or written about*'. Yet, feminist scholars have demonstrated that in tackling these commonalities, hierarchical and dominant sets of interests are exposed (Stoler 2002). Unsurprisingly, I felt it was important to move beyond a framework that highlighted a potentially difficult experience for mothers in raising mixed race children in a racialised society. In earlier discussions women intimated that interracial relationships seemed to hold greater significance for people outside of the relationship rather than those within it. Although some views dovetailed with professional voices, those patterns and rhythms were disrupted by new landscapes and new possibilities. The uncertainty that mobile identities create is a potential for misunderstandings and for border fissures to erupt and for feelings of dislocation or disjuncture. Equally, mobility carves out space to develop new networks and connections, through pathways that cement existing familial, social and political ties to place.

My motivation was to place individual white mothers' narratives within the context of a set of complex, shifting alliances and collective structures. Two important theorists inform my approach. Drawing on Stoler's research (2001), I wanted to make sense of why connections between mixed race mothering, illicit sex and cultural boundaries were such central concerns for national politics. Likewise, in Anthias (2006) I see how nations battle to secure borders through state processes of differentiation in the production of identities and belongings. In developing this idea, I aim to illustrate some of the mechanisms used to infer collectivity before I try to identify processes that determine white mother's positionality within those border spaces. I concentrate on a closer examination of three potential locations: interior frontiers, outer edges and borderlands. I shed light on how each location carries the potential to inform and shape our understanding of white mother's experience in very different ways. This view is supported through narrative accounts that explore how collectivity is experienced.

The theoretical assumptions that underpin placing social identity within a collective framework were influenced by the writings of Jenkins (2008). A key goal was to explore what happened if I began from the position of white mothering as a normalised position and then worked backwards. This development illustrates unstable and uneven discursive practices, which then designate who and how boundaries should be policed. To apply this proposition to national concerns with white mothering exposes a number of border dilemmas. Stoler (2002:79) remarks that nowhere is the relationship between inclusionary impulses and exclusionary practices more evident than through Colonial rules handling of *Mettisage*. The density and intensity of this discursive field speaks of fault lines in authority rather than categorical relations of difference. What happens to whiteness at interior frontiers points to a set of indistinct and shaded markings? Alba (2005) states this cannot be conceptualised in terms of single sets of processes. In pursuing this idea, I attempt to explore boundary interaction as an aspirational space. I use the narration of white mother's experience to explode what has previously remained a dry dialogue between theorists and professionals.

The purpose of the thesis is to:

1. To interrogate white mothers relationship to boundary making processes.

I attempt to understand what constitutes borders and to interrogate white mothers role in crafting or contesting those constructions. A core research aim was to unravel national belongings in response to symbolic systems and state authority. Several assumptions had to be examined more fully. Here I try and make sense of the nation as a political entity and to examine how nations operate a regulatory and legal framework, including setting out governance arrangements that determines citizenship rights, inclusion and exclusion (Anthias 1993, Yuval Davis 2005). Creating and securing the nation provides the collective with the legal, social and political tools to determine where borders should be located. The presumption is that membership criteria is clearly defined, consensual and well understood. I reason that nation is often indistinct and that membership fluctuates in response to shifting visions and external forces. Given this possibility white mothers positionality within the collective was not at all clear.

A primary objective was to demonstrate the nation as a set of belongings that result from naturally occurring social ties, kinship bonds and emotional commitments. This was an important first step in theorizing white mothers

location as firmly anchored within it. Secondly, as a physical and geographical territory, white mothers did not elect to be part of a nation but were born into it. The enduring nature of invisible ties, culture, gender, class and familial attachments, built on a shared past and common destiny. So, white mothers continue to share belongings and attachments with white women more generally. A key question is to consider in what way white mothering dovetails or challenges this model of membership? Do boundaries remain relatively intact as individuals manoeuvre over them, or do white mothers battle to re-position borders in more favourable locations? This called for a deeper understanding of gendered boundary construction alongside an assessment of the significance or meaninglessness of particular dimensions of difference to boundary work.

2. To critically examine white mothers boundary movements.

Once boundaries were sketched out I needed to theorise white mothers mobility. Alba (2005:25) discussed boundary blurring as a form of moderation that allowed members to appear simultaneously on both sides of the boundary. Yet I wanted to move beyond dualisms, to explore the possibility that white mothers inhabit a range of boundary locations and deploy those strategically to navigate through borderlines. I pursue these connections to examine what happens to borders when they are tested. Theories of alienation (Dover 1937) marginalization (Stember 1978) inbetweenness and transgression (Rainier 1990, Root 1996) all assume that white mothers are propelled into locations from which a spoiled and degraded status results. Hodes (1997) and Root (1996) represent this process as crossings from white into Black households. My contribution to this debate is to disrupt the 'taken for granted' and to examine in detail what actually happens in those border zones. In exploring white mothers' shifting positionality I wanted to emphasise a number of discrepancies.

Not only was it important to understand white mothers mobility, it was equally important that the research examined how different boundary locations define an experience. Friedman (1999:8, 2001) uses 'locational feminism' to argue that borders are spaces of enforced silence and miscommunication which act to protect by confinement. For Bauman (1997) people do not necessarily stay in borderlands but move through them to other locations and destinations. For postmodern theorists, social actors display a degree of choice about where to go and why. Marginality is not inevitable, particularly if boundaries are conceptualized as powerful sites of radical agency, as a number of feminist authors claim (Crenshaw 1991, Friedman 1998, Lewis 2005). An important research aim was to determine how borders discriminate against different social

actors, or consider if borders represent a range of different possibilities within a single space.

3. To explore how white mothers experience border interaction

A third important research aim was to move beyond oppositional frameworks to examine the potential to redefine white mothering as an experience in new landscapes. My concern was to closely examine borders that appeared to have social significance and an enduring presence in white mothers' lives. I pursued this line of research to consider locations that white mothers were locked into, or spaces they had been forced out of. I wanted to give more careful consideration to the outcome of forced movement to better understand its affects. My task was to identify whether, and in what ways, a mothers whiteness supported boundary work or problematised the workings of collective boundaries. Frankenberg (2004) discussed the slippery relationship between culture, race, and nation to specify how whiteness is lived, engaged with and appropriated. I wanted to evidence these tensions by exposing the myriad ways in which whiteness fostered white mothers' ongoing attachments. The contribution this research makes is to recast gender and class relations as variously blocking or enabling mobility.

What happens if white mothers boundary movement is considered transformative? One of my early developments in researching boundaries was to suggest gatekeeping strongly reinforced membership criteria and a rigorous sifting and sorting at the boundaries. I did not believe gatekeepers were able to make such informed judgments, or carry the necessary authority to implement those decisions. I wanted to position white mothers as political agents who challenged and shifted national landscapes by producing and then anchoring mixedness within the collective. I also wanted to demonstrate that in many ways white mothers continued to act as internal gatekeepers, policing collective borders in the national interest. For this reason, I re-frame what initially appears as racialised research, as a discussion more closely associated with a feminist theorisation of gender power.

Positioning the Research

The purpose for this research was to interrogate the experience of white British women who mothered a child with a male of white British/Black British, African, or African Caribbean heritage, between 1930 and 2010. In recounting those experiences through textual and oral narratives, I explore the presence and

participation of white mothers in the making and marking of collective boundaries. I have termed this experience 'white mothering' and I use this expression to indicate the particular experiences of a small, yet growing proportion of British society. The research makes a significant contribution to developing our understanding of 'stepping out'. Meaning what happens to group members who move beyond a collective boundary. I provide one example through the accounts of white British women whose children are positioned as 'other' (Tizzard 2002, Twine 1999, 2000).

The language of belonging

The thesis is concerned with understandings of concepts that remain ill defined or clumsy definitions. Given the ideological markings that lay behind language, academics have debated the importance of terminology in the construction of meaning. The role of language as a source of meaning has its roots in semiotics and ethnography (Saussure 1959, Baudriallard 1981). As language is seen to connect individuals to social acts, it is considered to bring structures to life. How does mixedness contribute to these discussions? Research interest has centred on how people produce situated versions and understandings (Denzin (2002:23). Language is both a source of signification and feelings about what language means. Back (1996) positions individual speech acts as sites of resistance, yet he also notes community and political intervention is active in shaping language use. A complicating factor is an acknowledgement that how categories are used has changed over time.

In his account of young Londoners' use of descriptive labels, Back (1996:124) considers how various identities can be inhabited or vacated through language processes. Young people appear to make choices in relation to how they feel about the potential points on offer, claiming identities that offer transformation, or vacating those identities they want to resist. For Back (1996:154) what Blackness means must be understood as local expressions and social articulations within national and international collectives. Simply put, language is a mechanism to understand what you think about yourself and what you think about others. When white mothers talk about Blackness, whiteness, otherness, nationality, racial, ethnic and tribal identities, what is the basis for the claims they make? I suggest that white mothering does not aim to consolidate a particular position but to challenge the basis by which those constructions are made.

Archival sources suggested it was customary practice for academic researchers to term Cypriot, Maltese, Somali, Adenese, Chinese, Indian, West Indian and West African as 'coloured'. In chapter 4, I have retained the use of historical

terminology when discussing the archival materials I sourced. Throughout the 1920s, terms such as *Negro*, *Coloured* and *Coloured Colonial*, *Anglo Negroid*, *half-caste* and *mixed bloods*, were used interchangeably making detailed research complex (Fryer 1984, Lawless 1995). To address these problems I tried to limit my research to sources expressly concerned with contact between white women and African descent males. Elsewhere, I refer to women's partners as 'Black men' to indicate males of African/African Caribbean heritage. This is not to suggest homogeneity amongst different ethnic groups or a vacuous space of Blackness. I hope that the women's narratives will draw attention to the sophisticated ways in which Black men's identities are constructed and reproduced. Moreover, deconstructing Blackness was not the main focus for this research; rather it was an essential component of this model of white motherhood.

Children and young people are referred to as 'mixed race'. I discuss my reasons for adopting this position more fully in chapter 3, the Research Methodology. Nonetheless, I use this phraseology to acknowledge my belief that interracial sex between white women and Black men remains controversial. My personal view is that 'mixed race' infers a set of politicised, sexualised and racialised experiences, that I feel are important not to lose sight of. I use the term 'mixedness' where I want to denote discursive patterns within a wider debate beyond children's identity. Mixedness can refer to the space in which families live, the politics and sociology of mixed race experiences, or the ways in which ethnicities are categorised and defined. The Commission for Racial Equality adopted this term in conjunction with London South Bank University at the 'Mixedness and Mixing' conference in September 2007. This event was organised to embrace the experience of a growing number of mixed race Britons.

My primary aim was to move beyond an examination of white mothers individual characteristics, or to unpack racialised language. To respond to this required a far more detailed examination of narrative than was possible. In race talk with white mothers, social constructions were mythical, illusionary and imagined but nonetheless made inter racial encounters appear real, often invoking the idea of distinct and discrete ethnicities. This sense of reality crumbled when women tried to grasp difference and explain its meaning. What is important for Anthias (2006:20) is a better understanding of dimensions of belonging beyond cultural initiation or cultural identity. Feelings and attachments are identified as similarly important processes. Propelling white mothers narrative into the spotlight begins to demonstrate those emotional attachments as a disruptive tendency to oppositional or closed categories, by demonstrating what is conjoined and linked.

I therefore position the thesis as an attempt to broaden understandings, moving beyond the scopic regime of 'mixedness' as immediately identifiable concerns with racialised identities or sexually transgressive acts.

Theoretical Framework

The starting point for the present study was to explore a number of theoretical frameworks linked to boundary work. In the following section I touch on how these shape identity possibilities although this is discussed in detail in chapter 2, the literature review. As a PhD student, I was consistently asked, '*Which theoretical approach are you using?*' The reason for this interest is to frame the research for others and make sense of connections beyond the immediate subject matter. I sensed it equally said something about me. I felt pressured to find one that 'worked' and would verify my research as meaningful. In the early days I jumped from Post Colonialisms construction of 'other', to Critical Race Theory's concern with domination and social struggle. I learnt from a Black Feminist theorisation of multiple oppressions (hooks 1992) and through Post Structuralist approaches of eternal wanderings (Sarup 1997). Each framework offered ways to connect to white mothering but imposed particular ways of exploring, defining and interpreting research that did not connect to the experiences I had listened to.

Bulmer (1982:152) argues that social research is informed by theory and interpreted in the light of it. Many scholars, criss crossing a range of disciplines, point to a powerful and consistent engagement with processes of collective identification and its relationship to belonging. Yet, arguably, despite 100 years of theorizing what defines and constitutes boundaries remains ambiguously defined. More often the lived live experience remains obscure. I offer a short summary here to acknowledge that in applying different theoretical frameworks, positionality has implications for how we might understand white mothers. I begin with Simmel (1908) who writes that commonalities are understood to define interior spaces by virtue of what is shared, making a boundary's outer edges co-determined. In this case, sites of difference are contexts where strangeness emerges through a process of 'othering'. Formalising difference in this way sends out powerful messages about the status of white mothers' identity, belongings and attachment to wider society. Not least, it indicates a problematical relationship between mother and child who are seen to reside in separate spheres, or are pushed into marginal zones. I then move on to Schutz (1944) who begins to address heterogeneity within collectives by addressing the complex relations between different social actors. In this case, strangers mark out essential and insurmountable difference. They can inhabit shared spaces but

these are landscapes of incompatible and unknowable meanings. What is important is to conceptualise the strangers' location within the collective, but only as peripheral group members. In terms of white mothers this location is difficult to sustain given their prior role as authentic group members. This poses a difficult set of challenges concerning a relationship between authority, legitimacy and exclusivity.

Moving away from Structuralism, Barth (1969) considers the constructed nature of social boundaries through an analysis of ethnic group membership. Barth (1969) extends the scope for research to question the underlying processes that support boundary formation as opposed to the role of agents in the making and marking of interior and exterior spaces. Lastly, Alba (2005) theorises from a postmodern stance drawing out the differential experiences of first or second-generation immigrants in 'receiving societies. Boundary negotiation represents interaction with bright and blurred borderline. It reflects what is going on and reflects what enables or blocks a given social actors manoeuvrability. Balibar (2006) takes us full circle with a recapitulation of the Stranger as an enemy within, rather than a critical friend. How these different conceptual frameworks are deployed has huge implications for how we conceive of white mothers' positionality.

It seemed natural to use narrative to redress this imbalance and elaborate the difficulties that families experienced, or to identify any emotional challenges that transitions into motherhood brought. Likewise, it was important to carve out a space for positive elements of family life to be identified. Feminist methodologies have been successful in uncovering untold stories to redress invisibility and problematise historically gendered representations (Harding 1987). I was equally mindful, as suggested by Steedman (2007:22), that what happens to the story once women are added is not at all clear. Haggis (1998) argued for a non-recuperative history as a means to depart from mainstream discourse. This avoids using the inclusion of women's accounts to supplement and rearticulate dominant narratives. White mothers problematise processes of externalisation where they display confusing signifiers of common origins, culture and interest, alongside unfamiliar conceptions of ethnic affiliation. What signifies collectivities is undermined where white mothers' intimacies bare 'blackness', but of a hue and shade that bears all the hallmarks of insider status.

I demonstrate how white mothers recast membership when they anchor otherness inside the group. By refusing to be pushed to the margins they retain the capacity for return crossings and constant movement between

interior/exterior landscapes. I will argue that in those moments new identities are not just possible but are actively claimed. In practical terms difference has to be different enough to do its job but whiteness and Englishness lack sufficiently sharp edges to be effective markers, leaving boundaries lacking authority and full of inconsistencies and contradictions. By introducing class as an axis of differentiation the research moved into a new direction and revealed myriad ways in which women stretch boundaries to encompass and integrate aspects of continuity and conformity that they value. Rather than consider boundary movement transgressive acts gendered 'crossings' designate women to be agents of change.

Adopting a feminist theoretical framework appears to successfully straddle political and everyday dimensions (Ramazanoglu 2002, Mauthner 2006, Mohanty 2003). These approaches helped to connect the meaning of white mothering to a gendered theorisation of power and the production of knowledge. This framework included gendered and racialised relations of difference and gendered constructions of the nation (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, Stoler 2001). Driving feminist constructions of knowledge is the exploration of heterogeneity and the practice of attending to experience as situated knowledge. Key features that have informed my own work draw from general principles of feminisms and cultural theory. I proceed on the basis that the production of knowledge is political and that a dominant discourse gains in credibility through the circulation, consumption and distribution of key ideas (Ames 1992, Kuhn 1995). I refer to feminisms theorisation of intersectionality as a framework leading to new ways of understanding complex, interlocking and multiple dimensions (Anthias 2007, Crenshaw 1996, McCall 2005). These authors shed light on processes that result from relational rather than essential characteristics. Without this layering of research what made white mothering so relevant, yet so invisible to nation building, would be virtually impossible to talk about.

The Nation as the Collective

What follows is a brief discussion of my rationale for electing the nation as an appropriate model of collectivity. I begin by suggesting that the nation infers a specific relationship to gender that was pivotal to my research (Anderson 1983, Anthias 2007, Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, Balibar & Wallerstein 1995). Adopting a gendered approach moves the research focus beyond purely abstract systems of signification to consider the notion of embodiment and agency (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992). On a practical level, national institutions provided a 'real' place that I could go to. I felt confident that I could bring the nation to life

through official documents and ephemera that gave the symbolic and imagined sphere a material quality. Through a close inspection of official records, I began the work of sketching out collective characteristics and qualities that shaped national belongings. I tried to build a picture of who and what the nation was by exposing the limitations and border control it established.

Secondly, it was important to illustrate boundary construction is a proactive, not naturally occurring process (Barth 1969, Hall 1997). In using the machinery of national institutions, documents revealed a patterned response to those who undermined and challenged group cohesion, and in the way that those institutions articulate the nation as a set of ideas about belonging. I argue the histories they produce and re-produce were linked across public institutions (Ames 1992, Featherstone 2006, Stoler 1995). By juxtaposing historical with contemporary representations of white mothers, I point to a long and entwined process of border management designed to exclude 'other'. An examination of underlying process reveals how the interaction of ethnicity, class and gender marks the nation in troubling ways. In the case of white mothers, 'other' is ambiguously defined. This work provided me with the operational framework to position white mothers within collective boundaries rather than assume their positionality as outsiders.

Lastly, the nation represented a given, an identity source that women were born into as subjects, but not as passive recipients of an identity. By re-framing white mothers' relationship as anchored and entrenched, I unearth a struggle to reposition white mothers beyond borderlines designed to safeguard a national interest. Where borders erupt, official sanctions include dislocation, a loss of personal security and a reduction in state protection through abandonment. These themes coursed through the archival holdings I accessed. An important goal was to move beyond textual based accounts that might frame individual narratives as exemplary cases or interpret positive accounts in this light. These stories did emerge within the archive. Nancy Cunard (MEP38/09) features extensively where she is shadowed by MI5 surveillance for her numerous Black visitors.

Gendering the Nation's Boundaries

Feminist scholarship can expose how gender inflects the nation in unacknowledged yet knowable ways and to gendered constructions of knowledge (Letherby 2003). This is discussed at length in chapter 2, as part of the literature review. By exploring patterns in greater detail I was able to position

domestic arrangements and the household as a unit of political organisation (Faust 1997:31). Women are implicated in nation making through a biological capacity for reproduction alongside cultural reproduction and the transmission of social values (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992). Stoler (2001) goes on to suggest that intimate relations are considered a significant sphere of political activity and that within intimate domains of domestic arrangements, race is made. I extend this rationale to consider the relationship between the domestic sphere and nation making as creating and managing collective belongings. The basis for that authority is consistent with feminist theory where gendered relations assign women a specific role in reproducing the nation (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992). Arguably white mothers represented a particular form of domestic arrangement that the nation called into question and scrutinized. The sexual relationships women entered into, the homes they made and the children they raised, located new forms of home grown 'difference' firmly within the nation's borders (Bland 2005, Tabili 1996, 2005, 2006).

Scope and limitations:

In the following section, I discuss some of the limitations for this research given its historical and controversial nature. There remains no seamless way of defining the subject area, nor the experience of *'white women who have given birth to a child whose heritage is of both white English or British and Black British or African or African Caribbean descent'*. Equally, it made no sense to suggest that women should be defined as a sub group on account of their choice of sexual partner. To identify them as such would be to suggest they enact sexual preferences and as the narratives will demonstrate this was clearly not the case. I considered using the term 'white m/other' to accentuate both connectedness and dislocation from wider women's experiences, but dropped this where I noticed a shift in my writing occurred over time and I increasingly moved towards the term women. I also situate this alongside a shift away from a rather singular focus on visible difference towards the complex layering of identities and interrelations of gender, ethnicity and the nation, overlain with class and whiteness. To some degree this level of complexity worked against my managing meanings for a very diverse sample.

Method Limitations

In the following section I briefly discuss the limitations of my chosen research methods. Chapter 3, the research methodology claims that archival materials and narrative enquiry provide a detailed and multidimensional account of *what it means to be a white mother of a mixed race child in Briton*, shading in the spaces

created by subject positions and subjectivities. In this process compromises have been made. Given the rich data sources available data analysis was not as comprehensive as possible. An initial tension was that archival research was only ever understood as substituting for a source book missing from the library shelves. Whereas, I contend that archival research provided a strong conceptual framework from which to piece together a story about who the nation is and who can belong. Nonetheless, a balance had to be struck between unending possibilities, practical considerations and selection strategies. In practice, nations articulate belonging through the materials they collect and the stories they construct. Those source documents are accessible in official archival holdings and I wanted to interrogate those materials to consider how the nation imagines its members.

What white mothers mean, *to the nation*, could have been explored more fully by contextualising each individual report within the time period. This would have enabled me to develop a strong national narrative by making thematic links across the reports and by cross-referencing codes. I feel there is further work to be done here, particularly undertaking comparative studies across colonial cultures. Likewise, through a detailed examination of documents I exhumed processes through which nations come to be. This, I believe, provided my sense-making framework for women's stories. I present a powerful thesis on the 'nation' and then use that to demonstrate how the nation responds to incursions at the boundaries and to the women who mount a boundary challenge. By demonstrating connectedness the data is layered, rich and soaked in multiple meanings.

In using a textual based approach alone, there would have been a tendency to speak on behalf of the women rather than allow women to speak through the research. I felt this would have framed the research in a particular way, potentially limiting what being a white mother means to a specific socio-historical context. As previously discussed, hearing women's voices was important and I felt it was necessary to supplement the archival materials with narrative. Arguably, narrative could have been a standalone approach, yet I believed that subjective accounts alone would obscure the gendered relations of power that shaped white mothers' experiences. I wanted to attend to both. The final number of interviews achieved is thirty. There is considerable diversity across the interviewees (see appendix B) that made patterns in the data more difficult to manage.

Representation

As previously discussed, it is important to qualify that in focusing on white mothers I draw attention to particular intersections of sexuality, gender and ethnicity. To be sure, mixedness takes many forms and singling this particular group out for study may be controversial. I make this point to acknowledge that in many early reports the greatest proportion of mixed race children were those born from relationships between white English women and Asian males. Despite statistical significance it was the intimate relations between white women and West African/Caribbean men that were identified as problematical. In the materials I sourced these relationships warranted intense interest and official scrutiny. Covert research sought to codify and typify white mothers' character alongside a sociological imagination that perceived mixed race relationships between these particular groups as unnatural, immoral and beyond the boundaries of Englishness (Song & Furedi 2001).

Independently, what do these women accounts represent? Is it Englishness, Britishness, and/or Whiteness, Europeaness or a space of otherness? Can women's accounts of Blackness locate partners within or beyond Britishness? As Ryan (2005:192) acknowledges, these narratives represent a partial story. I make no claims for the representativeness of the women I spoke to. All of the women came to me because at some point in their life they experienced interracial intimacy with a Black man leading to motherhood. The stories they told were woven around individual biographies, rememberings of distant or more recent pasts. Taken together these accounts demonstrate recurring themes and patterns that help to identify how identities and belongings are lived and channelled through shifting relationships across varying landscapes.

Structure of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, the literature review, I largely focus on exploring different theoretical approaches to boundary construction and the role of social actors in the construction of core/marginal spaces. I provide an overview of a significant body of work on boundaries or borders and attempt to weave a path through and into various disciplines. As Newman (2006) convincingly argues, we are living in a borderless world but boundaries and borders continue to receive high levels of academic interest. There is an ongoing engagement with virtual and concrete spaces and the dividing lines they articulate and construct. Whilst Newman (2006) addresses spatial borders and I focus more generally on social borders, boundaries are closely linked with identity construction and belongings that span sociological and geographical terrains. I flesh out the nation by drawing attention to symbolic structures and material culture to scrutinise the boundaries it

constructs. I used this material to illustrate how discursive frameworks position white mothers in relation to the nation and how the nation deploys particular intersections of gendered relations. Most importantly, I highlight the ways in which white mothers are inextricably conjoined yet dislocated from the nation.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed outline of the methodological implications of combining a mixed methods approach. I adopt a reflexive approach to this chapter identifying significant concerns in undertaking historical and sociological inquiry alongside unexpected benefits (Goldthorpe 1991). I outline my experiences of being a white researcher interviewing white mothers on questions of race and ethnicity. I also discuss the interview methods I adopted and the various approaches to analysis used reflecting on the nature of the data that emerged. I provide a framework for using historical approaches to data collection and analysis of textual based materials, as a non-historian. I then talk about the interconnectedness of two seemingly distinct approaches to draw attention to the production and circulation of forms of knowledge that span historical and contemporary moments in time.

In Chapter 4, I report on the archival collections I used and the historical materials I gathered from the 1930s-1950s as documentary evidence of an official engagement with white mothers, as a substantive area of interest. I provide detailed analysis of seven official documents that I finally selected to mount an official discourse. In taking mixedness as the starting point, I illustrate disjuncture between experience and discursive constructions of those experiences. I argue that archival research can achieve this by providing a way of focusing on the collective treatment of white mothers by public bodies and national institutions. I draw on Wallot (1998), amongst other historians, to develop an historical approach to research and follow this up by drawing on the rich body of work produced by cultural theorists and archivists such as Tilley (1991) Osborne (1999) and Featherstone (2000). These scholars illustrate the use of historical materials produced in a particular moment in time by officials exercising choice and then consider their relevance in the present.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I present detailed findings from my fieldwork. Narrative analysis has been distinguished as a distinct form of qualitative inquiry (Freeman 2006, Squire 2008, Riessman 2008). The driving focus for adopting this type of approach and data collection is closely concerned with understanding how people make and use stories to interpret the world they live in and how they represent their lives and worlds through storied accounts. Lawler (2003) writes narratives do not transmit a set of facts about the social world. The social world

is itself 'storied' such that individuals are situated within competing storylines where there can be no 'truth' claims. I analyse aspects of oral narratives of thirty white mothers aged between seventeen to seventy-five and who gave birth to a mixed race child onwards from the 1950s. I use these accounts to unpack mothers' experience of boundaries and boundary crossings.

I used a combination of different interview techniques that fit under the umbrella of a narrative approach. These included semi-structured and Biographic Narrative Interpretive methods (Wengraf & Chamberlayne 2001). This reflected my move towards more conversational style approaches to data collection, eliciting complex meanings about how categorisation shapes experience and how women challenged ideas about status, identity and location. I argue that the narratives reflect these various modes of interview, including biographic approaches where the interview began through a single question to elicit a 'gestalt type response' and a basic framework for the story (Wengraf 2001). I also used semi-structured approaches using an open-ended topic guide including: first meetings, developing relationships, children, relationships with significant others and locality (Arksey & Knight 1999). A third model of interview appeared more closely associated with oral history approaches (Perks & Thomson 1998). These tended to be associated with the older women who were reminiscing over a life span. The value of using different approaches requires more detailed analysis than I am able to achieve in this thesis.

In the final chapter, I synthesis my fieldwork emphasising women's position as insider group members who periodically act as gatekeepers and border guards. A fundamentally different experience emerges where women internalise their being marked as different and sense marginality or distant locations at boundary spaces. From this location, women are able to offer a critical perspective on belonging and non-belonging. I show how border spaces are used to erect barriers and frontiers that aim to protect the nation and then consider how white mothers disarm those borders. I also reveal how boundary acts affect lived experience and the strategies women undertake to resist a disadvantaged and degraded status. Women are immersed within a model of social expectations, with defined rules about the relationships they develop and sustain and the 'shared' context through which meanings are developed. Narratives point to the way in which identity is performed in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations, including the ways in which they mark and make the nation's boundaries (Atkinson Delamont 2006, Riessman 1993). I demonstrate how women deploy their cultural repertoire to demonstrate shared signification systems and symbols of belonging with other group members. I also offer three

possible locations for white mothers: as insiders who stay actively attached to the collective; as outsiders who are pushed into marginal spaces or cross over into new zones; and lastly in a space of otherness from which difference is normalised, where interior and exterior spaces have little relevance. The focus for this research has centred on a particular gendered construction of white/black relations. To better understand a relationship between positionality and gender, it would be beneficial to make comparison with studies that focus on the experience of black mothers whose children have white fathers.

Chapter 2: White mothering at the boundaries: strangeness and sites of Difference

Introduction

The focus for this chapter is to examine how different theoretical frameworks might shape identity possibilities for white mothers in different ways. For Jenkins (2008:25) exploring the genealogy of identity reaffirms its significance as a meta-concept. What he is arguing is that to understand identity we need to make sense of the theoretical approaches adopted to explain it. Drawing on different models can expose very different propositions and opportunities regarding a collective shape and form. One of the outcomes is that each framework articulates strangeness, sites of difference and social actors as having a particular relationship to boundaries. On the one hand is a central source of origin that is relatively bounded and static through which a core reproduces and mediates difference in peripheral positions. Identities are produced and reproduced relationally against and through, what Jenkins (2008:18) describes, an internal/external dialectic. A second proposition takes forward a more fluid conception of boundaries, where movement supports the performance of a multiplicity of identities over shifting contexts (Bauman 1997, Ryan 2003, 2007). What Alcoff (2007) asks is that we align different theoretical approaches to think through conflicting accounts within heterogeneity and to link objective interests with knowing practices in contemporary societies.

In the following section, I situate a white mothering experience within a wider discourse of imagined belongings and local struggles over national identity. I refer to Benedict Anderson who described national identity as a particular way of imagining a bounded unified space (Anderson 1983:6). At the same time, I am concerned with the autonomy of collective actors and how the mobilisation of white mothers' identities is enabled or blocked through different structures. I will argue that extant theory constructs white mothering as a fragmented, discontinuous belonging, whilst pointing to the historic maintenance of racialised boundaries and mythical shared origins. The framework for this discussion is influenced by Jenkins (2006) who argues entanglement, flows and interconnections demonstrate what is shared with a collective and what is unique to selfhood is not axiomatic (Jenkins 2006:15).

I begin by positioning social identity within a sociological paradigm that challenges a radical distinction between individual and collective identities. This approach emphasised boundaries as formative spaces; and the conditions laid on spaces where individual and collective identities emerge relationally. Guided

by Anthias (2006) it was important to interrogate processes that contribute to those constructions. Indeed, to reconfigure identity as an interactional dimension suggests temporality, spatial and social dimensions are all key factors in determining positionality. My discussion is strengthened by the notion that social identities are performed and achieved in a given moment, in a given location, subject to some form of validation (Anthias 2006, Atkinson & Delamont 2006, Riessman 2003). This thesis therefore explores questions of authentication, endorsement and the legitimisation of complex social systems.

I am influenced by Stuart Hall's discussion of heritage, where cultural meanings operate as a form of social glue and the material embodiment of a nation (Hall, 2005:24). Within the broader field of cultural studies there has been a drive to demonstrate the tension in presuming that culture is an essentialised component of national meaning, as opposed to what Hall (2005) claims is an ongoing project under construction. Using the literature, I question on whose authority organisational structures allocate particular values to particular identities. In terms of white mothering, I am concerned with accountability within those frameworks and how well they manage local uncertainties. On a number of levels, white mothers demonstrate all the physical characteristics of being at 'home'; yet, on another level they mark a rift between individual and collective value systems. Much more needs to be asked about how white mothers positionality is crafted by the categories, models and narratives at play in academic research and policy work.

Given that the function for this chapter is to begin to unlock white mothers positionality, I begin by exploring literature that articulates women's role as an imagined and representative boundary marker. I point to dimensions shared within a collective that are in fact social and political constructions. As Anderson would suggest, meaning rests on a set of social realities that are proposed, mobilised and re-negotiated through repeated enactments (Anderson 1983). This stance pre-supposes that knowledge is both produced and re-affirmed through usage, a dialogue that I develop throughout this chapter. I use this discussion point to mount a challenge to the theoretical assertion that white mothers signify limitations claiming the ontological basis for such claims are flawed. As Alcoff argues, we must challenge epistemic practices that naturalise and dehistoricise both the process and product of knowing (Alcoff 2007:56). In espousing a feminist methodology, I expose how the production of forms of knowledge is grounded in political and discursive practice.

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I referenced several authors (Edwards & Caballero 2006, Phoenix & Tizzard 2002, Wilson 1987) researching in the field of mixedness. I suggested that aspects of parenting practice have dominated this arena. Racial identity formation and parenting practice operate as contested sites of identity construction for white mothers. I do not revisit those arguments in detail here. In summary, I reason how academic interest in the measurement of white mothers' social networks, parenting ability and racial awareness, reflects long held assumptions concerning the social significance and sustainability of interracial relationships. Chapter 4, of this thesis, examines this proposition in far more detail and outlines how the production and circulation of this type of research conjures in a collective imagination the damaging notion of social cleavage between white/black, between mother and child.

I link two strong narratives to this model of thinking. Firstly, is a politics of visibility, a discourse that conveys powerful messages about who 'we' are. In its treatment of female bodies, and the way that connects to power relations, visibility has remained fertile ground for a feminist and postcolonial theorisation of positionality (McClintock 2004, Nagel 2001, Stoler 2001). Likewise, embedded in national histories is what appears a seemingly natural and common sense approach to racialisation and ethnic identity. Arguably, this discourse is constructed as merely reflective, rather than active in constituting a source of differentiation (Hall 1997, 2005,). Secondly, the Politics of Heritage, arguably a less defined discourse, contains an equally powerful set of ideas concerning the influence of culture on identity and belongings. Littler (2005) demonstrates how heritage, in its various forms, is used to ascribe importance and value to collectives. Hall (2005:23) claims heritage is a source of validation through which the nation is embodied, which sets out pre-established grounds for access and conditions user rights. I interpret this discourse as a battle to differentiate the authentic from inauthentic user, the legitimate from the disingenuous member.

Theoretical developments in this field are important tools in unlocking white mothering as a type of border dilemma. At the borders, what I suggest is most concerning, is the capacity for maverick group members to transmit heritage onto a new generation in a way that destabilizes established membership, access rights and user conditions. Stuart Hall draws out this type of discussion when considering the difficulties of re-imagining British heritage on more inclusive terms. Key to his work is to frame heritage as a model of preservation (Hall 2005:23). Using this approach, white mothering represents a model of parenting deficit where the objects that stand in for Englishness are not open to change, or

where group resources are being inappropriately accessed. Similarly, it is important to acknowledge any mandate to secure a 'Black History', reflected in the growth of Black cultural archives and heritage sites, tends to write out the role of white mothers in the development of Black British communities.

The relationship between heritage, culture and nation on the one hand and white mothers on the other, requires a level of critical attention that is beyond the scope of the thesis. I link this to Identity Politics and the Politics of Recognition to assert that recognition, or its absence, are in some way linked to national identity and to the social struggles of oppressed or marginal groups (Taylor 1994). If the primary basis for group membership occurs at the crossroads of particular intersections of race and culture, defining Blackness becomes a second set of barriers for white mothers' to cross that appear beyond her ability. Blackness and Black identity development is routinely highlighted as a site of tension for white mothers (Cheetham & Small 1986, Sewell 2000, Harman 2009). Both models, preservation and the cultural transmission of validated forms of heritage, place restrictions on a mixed child's access into any community.

In the rest of this chapter, the instability of distinctions between core/peripheral relations will come more sharply into view and it is this line of enquiry that I develop. I begin by considering Feminist epistemologies and a broad selection of scholars concerned with how and where meaning is made and the role of gender in the mechanics of that production (Alcoff 2007, Narayan & Harding 2007 Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002). I explore how feminist theory can attack the hegemony of foundational accounts that contribute to a particular gendered version of women's relationship to collectives. I then return to Anthias (2007:22) who outlines the importance of disturbing socially salient narratives to expose what influences our understanding of multiple identities, a multiplicity of identities, or our need to belong, by refocusing on the social mechanisms involved in those constructions. I use this position to begin to flesh out a relationship between gender and the nation and go on to argue that the conceptualisation of white mothering as a marginal location fails to attend to complex interactions of dimensions of class, culture, ethnicity and gender.

Feminist Epistemology

In the field of social theory scholars continue to engage with boundaries as an area for multi disciplinary discourse and critical debate. This rich body of work has a long legacy and I return to Simmel (1908) who over a century ago offered a theory of social distance by examining the properties and relations at which

difference emerged. His theory of spatial distance established the notion of complex organizational systems structured around core/peripheral relations. Difference was that which lay elsewhere in a space beyond and 'other' manifest in exterior spaces through spatial proximity to a core. Feminism radically challenged many orthodox views by using a theory of gender power to disrupt the dominant discourse (Brah 1991, Code 1981, Harding 1987, Harstock 1981). In drawing attention to the shortcomings of an androcentric and Eurocentric approach, feminism offered up a radical alternative to the meaning of sites of difference. New theories developed by feminist scholars claimed marginality and 'otherness' was a space from which to mount an epistemic challenge (Carby 1982, Harding 1987)

In her critical engagement with gendered epistemologies, Mohanty (2003) examined Western Feminisms own construction of new universalisms to reveal the marginalisation of the voices and experiences of 'developing world' women. Developing world scholars accused Western Feminism of adopting an authoritative gaze, and of being hegemonic in its' positioning of 'third world women'. This focus usefully illustrates a process that centres on difference, but then tries to capture and contain it by expressing what it means through general principles (Mohanty 2003:73). Equally, there is no place within this scheme for categories of meaning to be resisted. Mohanty (2003:64) considered it an attempt to fix the scope of its representativeness. Western Feminism, once positioned as a diktat from which to explore the significance of the category 'woman', was itself challenged as a paradigm that lacked the scope to include and recognise other feminisms, or, attend to the way that different feminisms are culturally, historically and geographically formulated.

By illuminating a black female imaginary Carby (1982) also questioned monolithic categories of experience. In recounting the experience of Black women, Carby acknowledged their role in developing understandings but questioned the extent to which Black women share intersecting interests with white women. The power of this type of critique is to demonstrate how discursive coherency limits the definition of the subject to a particular identity configuration. Secondly, it marks concern with how heterogeneity operates as a building block for fixity and strategically codifies the 'other'. What Carby (1982) acknowledged are the limitations attached to any framework that collapses individual experience into a common denominator. The challenge for feminist scholarship is to tease out particularity, whilst acknowledging what might have universal significance (Mohanty 2003:501). What we learn from Mohanty's (2003) critique of Western feminism is that existing approaches see 'other' as difference, but do not take

account of their role in the construction of those categories, or in the shaping of what they see. Based on this view, I am interested in examining white women's role in sustaining a particular collective configuration.

Notwithstanding these differences, spanning feminisms is a shared philosophical concern and joint commitment to attend to positions of power and to questions of legitimacy. By treating gender as a political construct feminist analysis revealed the dangers of adopting universalist explanations of group identifications. As Levine makes clear, gender points to systems of oppression that highlight the perpetuation of other forms of spatial and structural inequalities rather than stands above them (Levine 2004). In Mohanty's case, the term 'Colonisation' itself is one of structural domination that positions and defines other in a single location (Mohanty 2003:65). I see this approach as a useful tool to reflect back the structural basis for collective membership, its' variations and the limits to tolerance in any given structure.

I draw on Narayan and Harding (2000:ix) to consider how adopting an alternate perspective can use the structures of those frameworks to reveal the fundamentality of predominant thinking and actions. I begin by considering Harding's treatment of Standpoint Theory, an approach that argued expected patterns of gender differences operate as the basis for shared social locations (Harding 1991, quoted in Alcoff 2007:43). Marginality provides women epistemic advantage over men. Likewise, to return to Mohanty (2003) the ontological basis for objectivity and detachment are equally characterised by a distortion of gender identity. In both cases, despite occupying a shared social location, difference is implicit meaning that difference and sameness are locked in a single operational space through a relationship of appropriation and conflation. 'Other', and the self, is constructed through each other. This poses a unique set of challenges for white mothers in attending to experience as situated knowledge. The knowledge that is produced is not seen to result from particular methods, but is assumed to come from a particular group.

The argument that flows from this theoretical stance would position all white mothers in a social location marked out by a deviation from culturally specific gendered practices. The effect is to establish limitations on how we might interpret historical meanings and contemporary understandings of white mother's lives and experiences. In chapter 4, of this thesis, I trace historical literature and reveal how white mothers were commonly described in single, universal terms, to suggest a particular sort of woman exists, and one who is strongly associated with dysfunctionality. This type of reasoning locates white mothers in marginal

spaces outside of the dominant group, as formulaic of the shape and form of the interior. These sets of ideas, constructed in relation to a given organizational structure, and negotiated through particular ethnic, gendered and classed based systems; consolidate 'our' view that marginality is the outcome of a natural process that is self consistent and embodied. A second interpretation might be to consider marginality a violent act and outcome of organised activities in response to border threats.

One of the ways in which I use the literature is to unsettle those representations where they relate to white mothers. The strength of a feminist epistemology is to refocus on internal tensions as an opportunity to explore how communities are constructed and imagined (Stoler 2001: 344). By articulating an unfamiliar discourse, I point out that positionality is determined by violent acts of displacement. I outline how purposeful acts carve out the particularity of space through relations of difference with actual people. To be a white mother of a mixed race child is not experienced as a discursive representation, but an experience constructed and shaped in and through its use. Taking into consideration the growing numerical significance of white mothering, I advocate that research should focus on the demographic, social and political distinctions amongst these women rather than consider they constitute a minority community within a larger whole. One possibility would be a re-consideration of interracial interaction as a relatively commonplace occurrence in a contemporary landscape.

Alcoff (2007) writes of the need for epistemologies to draw attention to a generally differentiated experience, claiming that by doing so we can expose dominant social convention. Elsewhere is the model to understand where or who we are. In comparing and contrasting how different approaches conceptualise difference, they shape and control our understanding of what is distinctive about that experience. In terms of white mothering is there something we could identify as distinctive? Where meaning is negotiated through relations of difference, I demonstrate how, in spaces of mixedness, 'self' and 'other' are categories that are not easily contained but powerfully erupt. If white mothering can navigate across marginal and central locations the notion of border corrosion or border collapse is also difficult to sustain. In surveying a new landscape, I have the freedom to question if border spaces are conjoined spaces that offer up the possibility for identity transformation. Likewise, I consider how women might purposefully deploy particular identities across shifting contexts to achieve specific goals.

I explore the contemporary landscape of boundaries at a time when intersectionality is growing as an academic discipline (Anthias 1998, 2002, Crenshaw 1991, McCall 2005, Yuval-Davis, 2006, Ryan 2010). These authors re-direct our focus to examine the tracks and pathways that cross and disturb singular accounts of identity and belongings. Yuval Davis (1997, 2005) in particular, suggests the effect of an intersectional approach is to challenge what is 'representative' of the nation by drawing attention to the different experiences and positioning of those located within it. This discourse of differentiation marks out movement away from the assertion of hierarchically arranged relations of difference to focus on overlapping sets of discourses. In terms of understanding white mothering, how dimensions of gender and class interact with other core stratifying processes is significant. Sexuality, ethnicity, race and culture are intertwined and interlocking oppressive dimensions of difference that are all relevant. Anthias (2005:20) articulates these as part of a process rather than the possessive properties of individuals.

Linking closely to this work is the notion that collectivities intimate a particular shape with limit lines marking their outer edges (Yuval Davis et al 2006:330). In terms of establishing a relationship between boundaries and belongings, elements within the research scope include spatial territory, strategy and politics. When taken together these dimensions suggest borders are zones that surround geographical landscapes, but also in ways that just seem to 'make sense'. Equally, from a sociological perspective borders are symbolic representations that are no less potent or significant unifying practices. Gendering the 'nation', as a context for the study, focuses on a relationship to symbolic and material dimensions of a collectivity and to territorial space. Contextualising these dual dimensions demonstrates its' tremendous power as a source of identification. In terms of white mothering, this enables questions of a more differentiated and contingent understanding to develop. It also facilitates an approach that straddles social and spatial theory.

In the following section, I explore how feminist scholarship works across borders to make gender visible in the way that it continues to significantly shape and is shaped by nation and in the ways in which that is conceptualised. An important theoretical development has been to position the nation as an ideological construct, reflecting gendered cultural performance (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, McClintock 2004, Stoler 2001). Likewise, a feminist theorisation of national culture demonstrates links to national representations of private and domestic spheres (McClintock 2004, Nagel 2001, Stoler 2001). I conclude this section by

considering three particular areas in more detail: the politics of reproduction, the production of homespace and threats to national security.

A Gendered Nation

Despite different feminisms, scholars demand that we rethink a relationship between gender and the nation to carve out women's role in boundary construction and maintenance (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, Faust 1996, Hodes 1997, Ryan 2010). Nation is critiqued as a gendered, racialised and classed collectivity, that privileges and safeguards particular modes of being (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, McClintock 2004, Rendell 2006, Stoler 2001). So, gender is used by these academics to both symbolise and undermine the integrity of the nation's boundaries in a particular way. Together these authors demonstrate how gendered constructions of the nation are also national constructions of gender. Borders are documented as exclusive social and political frontiers, contested geographical territories, borderlines and nameless spaces beyond boundary edges. I suggest this gives borderlands a potentially differentiated composition to play with rather than neatly demarcated fields of interior/exterior spaces.

In discussing 'imagined communities', Benedict Anderson (1983) challenged the notion of a nation being a physical space, suggesting the power of a nation rested on the compulsion of individuals to make it real. He offered a radical new approach to understanding the nation, as an imagined more than imaginary, and fictive as opposed to fictional construct. Anderson (1983) uses the concept of simultaneity to demonstrate how participation in everyday activities through simultaneous acts conveys a sense of realism to a nation (Anderson 1983:26). The nation can touch people by invoking a sense of itself in a way that they cannot explain but they feel a part of. His work drives the research agenda to focus on the nature of the symbolic (Anderson 1983). Small acts, such as reading a broadsheet, once performed simultaneously serve to reinforce the idea of a community of collective interest. The important point is that those connections are consumed and re-produced through interaction, not by structure.

For Anthias (2007), it was important to interrogate process and use this to distinguish a sense of belonging from the matter of identification. Her focus is on understanding a relationship between stable markers and affirmation. Some feminist scholars feel the basis for these markings develops from an explicit gender bias in nationalist theories that remains undisturbed, in the way that they remain quiet about women's wider role (Yuval Davis 2005, Nagel 2001). What Anthias (2007) does is to create a space for belongings to be claimed, regardless

of whether you model appropriate identification markers. In an earlier study, Anthias (2002:20) described belongings as an experience closely linked to legal and policy frameworks. Inclusionary practices and lived experience were bound together with citizenship rights and responsibilities. Likewise, McClintock (1997:89) demonstrates the familial and gendered structuring of institutional frameworks claiming the result is differential access to social, economic and political realms.

The effects of this feminist reasoning are to move belonging beyond an imagined national status, and to re-articulate nations as historical practices that embody institutional arrangements, shared traditions, identity and values. These authors reasoned that in positioning women as symbolic boundary markers, male nationalist theories (Balibar 1991, Boehmer 1991, Gellner 1964, quoted in McClintock 1993:62) have underplayed contested meanings about the nation, and downplayed the significance of the material practices through which groups come into being. An important feminist intervention was developed through the work of Anthias and Yuval Davis (1992, 1998, 2005) who pushed the notion of embodiment to critically examine the role of sexual reproduction and its relationship to future nation building. Feminist scholarship has pushed forward concerns with how the very private spaces of home seep into a public arena to link the personal with cultural, social, economic and historical dimensions (Kuhn 1995:5).

The Politics of Reproduction

I have drawn attention to the way in which a number of feminist scholars explain nation as a historically constructed category that reflects women's position in a society (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, Stoler 2001). Part of the framework for analysis has been to critically examine the links between the rhetoric of motherhood and its classed, raced and gendered ideological basis, alongside the operation of state practices (Byrne 2006, 2006a, Kanaanaeh 2002). I now focus on domestic politics and the regulation of women's fertility and reproductive rights as a key feminist battleground. Smart (1992) is concerned with understanding how women in socio scientific and legal discourse are constituted through classed and raced, as well as gendered terms. She reasons the category of motherhood is shielded from wider criticism, if 'irregular mothers' are positioned as an affront to shared ideals. Whilst consciously trying to avoid the seductiveness of 'woman', as a singular category, she lays out the paradoxical positioning of women as powerful and powerless. What Smart (1992) identified was a need for detailed historical research, as an approach that could examine the theorisation of gender power that persistently lurks behind maternal politics.

One of an important number of feminist interventions has been to challenge taken for granted assumptions about motherhood. I reason how a politics of motherhood might help to understand the consistently high levels of 'voluntary placement' of mixed race children into local authority care, and the over-representation of mixed race children in those settings (Barn 1993, Harman 2009). Importantly, I argue an undercurrent of pressure operates to socialise mixed race children into a minority cultural value base to avoid being labelled a 'bad parent'. Elsewhere, I acknowledged that source texts informing these discussions are works authored by academics, yet they openly address the sexualisation and racialisation of white mothering. As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, it is not difficult to find a straightforward racialisation of the homes of white mothers as 'coloured spaces'. One of the ways we might re-interpret these findings is by questioning the theoretical model applied to explain them.

In my opinion, these findings commonly reflect methodological shortcomings, most notably a strong working class bias. Having examined this material in some detail, I consider how white mothers' homespace is characterised as dislocated. In sustaining many of the findings from those early urban ethnographic studies (Little 1947, Collins 1955) mixedness remains understood as a site of separation and disjuncture with the past. Mixedness represents a model of homespace that is cut off from the collective bonds, kinship ties and membership that were once shared. The assumption is that white mothers and their mixed race children are joint occupants in spaces of unresolved conflict and hostility. The theoretical basis behind this appears to rest on the assumption that mixed race relationships are incompatible. The conclusions that have been drawn infer mixedness precludes the development of secure intimate relationships or strong emotional bonds. For the most part, white mothers appear emotionally distant from their partners, unable to understand their children, lacking in access to supportive social networks and dislocated from a broader value base. I argue that these early studies were steeped in class discourse. The move towards racialised research supplements these early accounts with the notion of white mothers inability to understand their children across racial borders. In summary, class and race permeate a discourse of white mothering in ways that conclude white mothering is a sexualised, racialised dysfunctional status.

As I will go on to discuss, in sociological theory the Stranger is important in terms of illuminating collective value, whereas collective worth seems to depend on how the stranger's role is articulated and understood. Likewise, the view that

gendered cultural practice seamlessly transitions between generations without challenge has been tested by feminist theory (Stoler 2001). This forms the basis of Byrne's (2006, 2006a) study of white women transitioning into motherhood. She chooses this group to establish the prescription of particular ways or sets of mothering practices performed through the everyday actions of whiteness. Byrne's (2006, 2006a) treatment of motherhood operates at the intersection of race, class and gender. What she argues is that mothers construct and re-construct these categories to help make sense of mothering behaviours. Her findings point to class infused accounts of whiteness that weave in and out of narratives of motherhood. As discussed by Byrne (2006, 2006a), women's relationship to their locality significantly shifted, for reasons of self-validation and approval, following childbirth. Increasingly interaction was negotiated through public agencies and the use of public space. Libraries, parks, coffee culture, health and early years settings became pivotal in the negotiation of a particular version of motherhood. One way to interpret this is to consider how public space is constructed to support a class based version of motherhood.

In an important early paper on this subject, Anna Davin explored the interaction of class and motherhood to claim women's reproductive capacity is deeply connected to nation building. She teased out a marked shift away from individual and private child rearing practices towards the development of socially determined and formalised codes of mothercraft. For Davin (1983) the discourse of motherhood emerged at a time when racialised superiority and class privilege dominated. These formative ideas were underpinned by Eugenicist beliefs in women's role in rearing and breeding and forged a powerful link between national well-being and motherhood. As World War 1 drew to a close, women's 'call to arms' was to cradle healthy babies and establish centres of moral excellence that would ensure future national progress. At this time, a powerful discourse of racial and moral degeneracy confers abnormality on individual bodies as threatening to national well being (Bynum 1992, Stoler 1995:31). Acting as an important barometer of national wellbeing, mothercraft was become key to the socialization and assimilation of new group members.

Davin (1983) illuminates how women receive formal guidance in domestic management practices, in raising children and in selecting an appropriate partner. This explodes the myth that a gendered domestic realm is located in a private intimate. Davin (1983) is able to demonstrate that at this time, domestic space was deemed increasingly important in upholding a particular version of the nation and is increasingly structured through state institutions, public bodies and professional affiliations. An important development is to demonstrate how

mothering, once of marginal interest, was propelled into a public arena as a matter for national scrutiny and public policy. Approved practice was linked to a set of assumptions about preferred cultural practices (Davin 1983:21). What I learn from this is that maternal behaviour acts as a fundamental marker of race and class that shapes a wider set of relations of power.

The cult of domesticity also led to the re-drawing of boundaries around good and bad mothering practices. A particularly influential catalyst was the elevated social status attached to being a 'good mother'. This draws us to McClintock (1997:89) who claims the sanctioned institutionalisation of gender differences remain ever present. By designating reproduction as simply swelling internal membership and the integration of new members, issues of women's labour are sidelined. A number of scholars demonstrate this affect, claiming developing nations, rarely, if ever, place gender equality at the centre of their core vision, and end up replicating taken for granted gendered cultural representations and preferred social arrangements. For Sharoni (2008:46) arrangements offer women membership opportunities within a collective and incentives to be political actors but remain fairly prescriptive in the operation of gendered norms.

As argued by Jacobus (2003), the archives of aspiring nations are full of bureaucratic administration and policy frameworks. They speak of freedom, change and informed choice, but point to tensions and contradictions, to responsible parenting and appropriate family size. Scholars working in this field discuss how archives confer status on particular documents that provides the documentary evidence needed to define and construct a national identity (Ames 1992). This is channeled through motherhood (Ashrawi 2002, Fournon & Schiller 2003, Kanaaneh 2002). Feminist scholarship illuminates that whatever their contribution, women's labour has not resulted in transformed gender relations (Yuval Davis 1989, 1997, Nagel 2005, Sharoni 2008). Women may even have been active in nationalist struggles, particularly, struggles for national liberation (Nagel 1998). I refer to Ahswari (2002) who examines how the political manipulation of Palestinian women is negotiated through access to universal health care services. What is termed inclusive health care indiscriminately conditions the behaviour of all women and operates as the basis for ethnic group differentiation between Palestinian and Israeli women. During this process, health agencies are able to assemble detailed intelligence on ethnic group customary social and cultural practices. At the same time, they lay down new roadmaps for later generations to follow, challenging customary practices through the offer of much needed care.

Returning to Davin (1983), there is a distinction in terms of performing reproductive capacity and caring functions, alongside what it means to be a mother. Meaning is shaped by class based difference, a dimension that is initially subsumed within the collective but later re-emerges on account of class based affect. Through the research middle class women assert their independence move into education and employment but shirk any responsibility to the state. Whereas, working class women lack morality, have limited aspiration and inappropriately raise children (Davin 1983:16). In terms of furthering our understanding of white mothering the impact of class difference remains underexplored. Importantly, I take from Davin (1983) that difference is not eradicated within a collective, it is re-articulated and transformed. Secondly, undifferentiated gender accounts distort meanings. Nonetheless, all classes of women will experience the affect of gender based difference. Any attempt to fix meaning is also therefore an attempt to establish the limits to inclusion. The introduction of 'Mixed Race', in the Census (2001) might also be interpreted in this light (Aspinall 2000, 2003).

Drawing on a Marxist feminist framework marks out a further important shift in thinking. Skeggs' (2004) use of this framework conceptualises reproduction as a form of labour alongside other modes of capital accumulation. What Skeggs (2004) theorises is how the value of such capital bearing accrues to a wider group by boosting the essential building blocks that others draw from. Similarly, a Marxist theory of capitalism is fundamental to Sarup's (1997) construction of home as a site of reproduction. Sarup (2005) is concerned with the sovereignty of homespace and extent to which it offers a space for autonomous authority and vehicle for the expression of private truths. To some extent mothering a mixed race child might indicate the routing of group resources to non-group members. Paradoxically, it indicates that white mothers' labour offers ongoing use value for the collective. The tension here is that white mothers' capital is a product of the group and therefore remains a resource for it. They are no longer vessels to transmit across from one generation to another, a stock of resources on which the future nation can draw, but instrumental in identifying what Wallerstein (1991:71) calls the 'Construction of Peoplehood'. In terms of white mothering, what is problematical is how that is interpreted and what that might mean.

The role of ethnicity in boundary formation will be discussed later in this chapter. Momentarily, I return to Anthias and Yuval Davis (1992) who explore communities that generate ethnic and national identities. How boundaries are made and drawn, and in particular, women's relationship to a cultural value base, are positioned within a transforming landscape and hegemonic discourse of

Englishness. Their work emphasized how the power relations implicit to national and ethnic identities locate women's contribution to group formation in a sphere of 'naturally occurring' behaviour and objectively determined membership criteria. Anthias and Yuval Davis (2005:522) illuminate an extended account of women's reproductive role, well beyond the physical act of childbirth. They signify and articulate a model of national distinctiveness that ensures a particular version of the nation comes to be. The place where this is most clear is in their acknowledgement of women's role in the construction of collective ideology and the cultural imaginary. In the formation and modelling of essential building blocks, language, taste and experience craft family identities in ways that observe and challenge a national rhetoric.

Importantly, a growing body of feminist research has acknowledged how nations are imagined and produced has implications for migrant women and 'non white' British citizens (Ali 2003, Brah 1999, Blockland 2003, Yuval Davis 2006). In their response to the White Paper '*Secure Borders – Safe Haven*' (Yuval Davis et al 2006), a framework is set out for thinking about how challenging representations lead to a redrawing of boundaries. Scholars grapple with the material affects of British political systems and the gendered construction of national geographical boundaries that confer or deny belonging in the context of migration. These accounts help to explain how national accounts of reproduction and fertility operate from a contested site of political resistance and change. In each case, reproduction, childhood socialisation and integration signify a functional role for women that is more than symbolic or marginal. Although constructions of nations depend on dynamic social, political and historical factors, these authors illustrate that ultimately nation is subject to the power of the womb. This source of power creates the uneasy potential for nations to be unmade (Davin 1983:12).

In Kline's (1993) discussion of minority ethnic mothering there is evidence of the wider policy work needed to secure borders. She demonstrates two ways in which nations assert legal authority over mothering practices to legitimate and consolidate the role of the nation. Child welfare policies are used to cite ethnic minority mothers as the cause of the difficulties they experience. At the same time, an ideological framework obscures the roots of the barriers and obstacles they face. The imposition of dominant cultural values can place migrant women in the uncomfortable position of questioning community childcare practices and community values. One possible effect is to leave women vulnerable to being constructed by the courts as inadequate parents and then risk having their children taken away, or be considered disloyal members of the community. What these authors are concerned with is to demonstrate that women do not easily

produce citizens of the nation, if partners are not considered to be legitimately of that nation (Kline 1992, Fouron & Schiller 2003).

National Security

The Trojan Horse provides a useful metaphor for thinking through white mothering as a strangely familiar, yet, potentially disruptive force. I return to Davin (1983) who focused on strikingly similar points but with reference to class as an axis of differentiation. Class difference was both managed and sustained through moral guidance and instruction. As discussed, a growing body of research concerned with transnational social fields explores the interaction of ethnicity, belonging and nation amongst ethnic minority mothers who appear to straddle borders (Blokland 2003, Mahtani 2003, Toyota). What is important is how these texts help draw out the saliency of processes that verify links to the nation in order to mark out differentiation. This helps further our understanding of what happens to whiteness if white middle class women also produce a state of 'otherness'.

In nationalist discourse the metaphor 'mother', in relation to the nation, asserts links between gender and nationalism that are widely used. Nations are also structured by a theory of gender power and this is equally underscored by a belief in essential difference. Jacobsun (2003) argued that gender is grounded in a specific politics of place, and articulated through a national cultural identity and memory. A wider critique of existing scholarship is this role reflects a masculinist definition of femininity and of women's proper place in the nation (Nagel 1998:252). In discussing women's role in the drive for Algerian independence, Nagel (1998:254) demonstrates the significance of tradition as a legitimating basis for nation-building and cultural renewal, which rearticulates masculine privilege. The high visibility of women directly participating in nationalist movements and military conflicts sends out confusing messages about the motivations for their involvement and inclusion. Equally, women's status gains are quickly eroded in times of conciliation and peace and 'post war periods' often see a return to old practices (Faust 1996, Censur 2006).

In terms of social constructivism, in applying normative standards to define a category, other elements are defined out, but perhaps less easily than might be anticipated. Writing about the development of ethnic particularity in New Zealand, Dyson (2005) recasts historical dynamics between strangers and indigenous peoples, as a progressive movement towards biculturalism and having 'partners' of different ethnic biographies. The effect is to try to address the marginalisation of the Maori in the national narrative and to transform the

nation into a 'two peoples - one nation' enterprise (Dyson, 2005:116). From a political perspective the effect is twofold; firstly is to decentre and disrupt white majority narratives and secondly is to acknowledge local struggles over ethnicity. In this example the foundations to articulate and reimagine nation are laid. Home operates as a space that can articulate and uphold multiple differences as well as fragmented identities.

I would argue that in varying ways this dualism complicates how we define 'self' or position 'other'. Women, who are able to address the problems and possibilities of their own society, invariably act in ways that place them outside of it (Ashwari 2000, Ilkkaracan 2008). One example is given through Fourron & Schiller's (2001:555) discussion of economic pressure. Haitian mothers need to take up formal employment outside of the home, which is considered by the community to degrade the social status of male household heads. Feminist scholarship reminds us how women are emblematic of the nation in ways that often translate into actual limitations. In particular, women's sexual behaviour becomes a site marked out for special interest where they demonstrate links between bodies, desire and control (Ashrawi 2002:73). The female body is no longer a symbolic marker but a target to be appropriated and degraded (Ilkkaracan 2008, Stoler 2001:52). In times of political conflict, mass rape and sexual violence are commonly used to undermine ethnic purity, origin and lineage, divesting nations of honour, security and status (Ashrawi 2002, Ilkkaracan 2008).

What is important is an acknowledgment that organised violence re-establishes the institutionalisation of gender power. As Nixon suggests, the proliferation of nations and states post 1990 indicates a recurring desire for ethnic nationalism. There is a move to carve up territories into ethnically homogenous polities that have some currency on an international stage (Nixon 2004:69). Most have been accompanied by an upsurge in violence aimed at ethno-biological purism and demand for democratic rights. Arguably these nationalisms begin with the crafting of the domestic sphere as a natural home for 'good women'. Postcolonial studies and in particular, the Cult of Domesticity, demonstrate how the idealisation of womanhood was key to fixing the social and cultural organisation of Colonial spaces, which included the demarcation of gendered places (Callaway 1987, McClintock 2004, Stoler 1991, 1995). The management and regulation of gendered sexual behaviours, including gendered sexual sanctions, was particularly amplified to demarcate positions of racial power and privilege across public and private spaces (Stoler 2002: 345).

In her detailed discussion of the formative dimensions of nationalism, Anne McClintock illuminates the way that it projects particular sets of characteristics as natural and normative definitions of nations. McClintock (2004:93) reasons that passivity, subordination and frailty, are commonly upheld as a reflection of women's characteristics on a national scale and the encoding of female bodies is modelled on particular gender and sexual norms. Of special significance is how the iconography of familial and domestic space passes into credible modes of social organisation that reflect and recreate the nation. The wider literature on this subject has illustrated how gender is central to the process of group reproduction and identification. Likewise, constructions of gender and sexuality are foundational to the development of nations. Fouron and Schiller (2001) discuss how women who occupy home space work to define that domain as a site of national honour and virtue. Through these actions they become committed to the ideas and imagery that build the nation.

In furthering these links, Hill Collins (1991) reveals how ideological constructions of the family operate as a fundamental principle of social organisation but on a national scale. For example, the workings of hierarchies based on race, gender and age comply with national aspirations, but are represented as normal and neutral categories. Family rhetoric confers legitimacy upon a particular family form, whereas family, as an institution, simultaneously creates and reproduces structural inequalities (Hill Collins 1991:57). An important element of family life is family values. These terms and conditions link motherhood and home life to nation states across historical contexts. One interpretation of Hill Collins work is to position family values and ideal families as the nations pulse, a systematic and profound measure of national well being. Stoler (1995:35) develops this point through her critique of Foucault's linking of racism and the technologies of sexuality. Within an Imperial racist order women's place is in the home and when all is working well, homespace is a location manufacturing naturalised hierarchies.

If origin is theorised as birthright, then female bodies convey an essential truth about identity claims, operating as a fixed point relating to bloodlines and lineage. Of central importance, to these debates is the myth of ethnic essentialism, a myth that predated the birth of new nations, but validated their need to come into being (Balibar 1991). Feminist scholarship has been critical of structures that create and codify practices to normalise gender and ethnic inequalities. Unlike Balibar (2006) the nation that McClintock describes conveys multiple not unitary interests and unpredictable not immanent interests (McClintock 2004:89). In the work of Jaimes and Halsy (2004:299) First Nation women stand at the forefront

of political resistance to avoid ethnic obscurity. They stand in for families, historical practices and to protect the community against displacement and further marginalisation. Through agitation and direct female participation First Nations are sustained.

The assertion of identity claims operates within a wider national framework and legal model that challenges belongings. To examine this I consider how and which borders are vociferously policed and defended. The discursive construction of Black and minority ethnic women as bearing children that belong to ethnic minority groups, demonstrates this logic. A racialised, gendered and spatially segregated home structure creates real affects for Black women, where it may need to embrace more than one understanding of nation (Hill Collins 1991:156). Black and minority ethnic women and migrants in particular operate at the margins rather than the core of a cohesive nation. Lewis's (2005) work with immigrant women suggests belonging is no longer a question of place of origin or cultural capital, but the needs of the state to demonstrate tolerance and cultural plurality. In this paradigm national symbols mapped onto women's bodies suggest limitations, but also offer up new entry points as places of possibility.

In accounts of Southern Reconstruction, Censur (2003) describes how middle class white women assumed far greater control over aspects of Plantation management and household life during the American Civil War. In taking up positions of authority, women found different ways to rethink the lives they wanted and re-emphasised the importance of their role in the domestic sphere to achieve this (Censur 2003:276). An important finding from these approaches is to demonstrate how female productivity is scrutinised when gender norms are contested. Several authors suggest the preservation of exclusivity means provenance becomes a critical question for national security measures. This plays out through different hierarchies of power. For Censur (2003) post war gender relations systems were re-established to support primogeniture and male dominance in economic and political domains. Widows were forced to withdraw and assign all property rights to first-born sons.

European research also demonstrates that citizenship is not gender neutral. In the official papers of Colonial Offices, the histories of race mixing describe the legal status of children born to 'native women' and Colonial service men. Colonial policy reassigned children's identification and citizenship status to reflect their mother's Colonial status, dissolving any rights, in this case, to British identity claims achieved through paternal lines. White women in interracial relationships

test the limits of citizenship by problematising the legal implications of race mixing. In researching Colonial Germany, Wildenthal (1997:266) acknowledges commonalities across Europe in the lack of succinct racial definitions, but a period marked by a racialisation of contemporary thinking. As chapter 4, will demonstrate, British archival holdings demonstrate the significance of those early decisions for citizenship and race relations.

Homespace

As discussed, scholars suggest Nationalism is an ideology legitimated through discursive practice and based on a common history, shared culture and identifiable blood ties. Stoler (2002) challenges these assumptions asserting individual agency in homespace is as yet unchartered. For Stoler (2002), nations are as likely to be 'home made' and come into being through formal channels. My primary concern is to consider how white mothers unsettle and problematise the notion of homespace. They send out confusing signifiers of common racial origins, shared culture and interest, alongside unfamiliar conceptions of disloyalty and ethnic affiliation. Despite being of that place, white mothers cannot offer secure rites of passage to their children. At the same time, there has been limited research to consider the role of social action in determining dimensions of homespace, or to consider the belongings that white mothers do generate. Different accounts suggest that home operates as a space where identities are mutually performed and reconstituted, but they also offer scope for transformation.

The materials produced through homespace provide individuals with an opportunity to reconstruct or reproduce divergent applications of validated meanings. In her historical research, using 19th Century women's literature, Rendall (2006) interrogates the degree of influence that missionary practices had on gender hierarchies by considering the role and representation of white wives in the Colonies. The themes and patterns she examines account for women's journeys across race and place. They reveal how women took on a far more public profile than was anticipated, leading to a strong sense of personal accomplishment. Rendall (2006) argued the dynamic force of women's moral influence challenged neat definitions of public and private domains where one seeped into the other. Importantly, these narratives also provide a more detailed understanding of how women leave one homespace to re-create home in another.

Scholarship in this field has been broadly concerned with addressing the affect of migration on belonging and a diasporic lived experience. Webster's (1998)

research explores loss and fragmentation amongst Caribbean female migrants coming to Britain. Newly arrived to the 'motherland' women experienced displaced loyalties and dislocated belongings. Despite the notion of shared histories, British citizenship was overshadowed by racialised sentiment and exclusionary practices. One of the ways this contradiction has been discussed is through a loss of class differentiation within groups. Black historians and policy analysts assert the outcome of migration for the Black middle classes was a loss in class status (Fryer 1983, Modood et al 1997). In chapter 4, I discuss how post war in-migration to urban enclaves prompted demands from an English white working class for an elevated status. Somewhat problematically, race and sex entwined in a discourse of miscegenation to expose white mothering as an equally degraded status.

As has been examined in great detail, Stoler (1995) points to an unresolved relationship between race and class at the theoretical level. She writes that Anderson articulates how racism derives from class, whereas for Foucault class derives from racist discourse (Stoler 1995:30). In the example of white mothering, the way in which gender and sexuality intertwine with race and class complicates this. Fenton & Bradley (2002:13) bring together a range of academics to remind us how the particularity of Marxist and Modernist's sociological frameworks make assumptions about social determinacy that made it difficult to address questions of multiple social identities or the linkages between them. They discuss the saliency of the economic and cultural aspects of class and ethnicity is necessary to attend to multiple positionings in contemporary societies (Fenton & Bradley 2002:23). To sharpen this focus, Rattansi (2002:630) discusses linkages between class, race and sexuality. This moves the discursive field of race/class or class/race hierarchies beyond the legacy of Marxist concerns with capital or a Foucauldian analysis of governmentality. Fenton & Bradley (2002) propose that postmodernisms free-floating identities are tempered, by identifying patternings in ethnicity and in the positioning of ethnic groups when interrelations of culture and class are applied to analysis.

If ethnicity has overshadowed class as a factor in social cleavage, Anthias (2001) illustrates the complexity of positionality experienced by migrants occurs at the '*interplay of a range of locations and dislocations*' (Anthias 2001:634). This focus opens up the possibility for homespace to operate as a multidimensional launch pad for departures and homecomings, for being at home whilst away and away at home. The impact of migration suggests that home is no longer confined to a

single geographical location, but can be reconstituted in arenas where meanings are revalued, contested or provide the possibility for change. Sarup (2005) equally reasons the immigrant demonstrates identity in ways beyond the enactment of origins and identification. Home no longer reflects a space we simply occupy, but is situated in a context that constrains and shapes possibilities. I argue the main challenge for theoretical approaches to border research is to distinguish movement considered to be of a permanent nature from that which is only temporary. Associated terminology of transitory arrangements has clear implications for how we understand white mothers relationships.

To move forward with this debate I felt it was important to try to get beneath the impasse of transgression. In socio-linguistic terms, transgression indicates contravention and some element of wrongdoing. There are implications to particular types of boundary infraction that as of yet, remain unclear. Interracial sexual relations are one example of group members stepping beyond the written and unwritten rules of national and populace governance frameworks. In part this lends itself to a close examination of a collectivities role, and the role of nominated actors, who moderate some part of the behaviours, roles and preferences of its members. As a sociological concept transgression remains a powerful metaphor to denote unidirectional movement between two distinct spheres. The outcome for women who have stepped, over, outside or been placed beyond collective frontiers, is a degraded status.

I try to tackle two significant gaps in existing explanatory frameworks. The first is to assume that once crossed boundaries remain relatively intact and cohesive behind them. White women move across borders without affecting their composition. A second assumption is that white mothering is a one-way ticket into some form of exile and that prior connections are eclipsed in a non specified space of mixedness. What is problematic for these account is that spaces white mothers' travel away from and towards, are ambiguous and ill defined destinations. Gowan's (2006:82) description of the 'plurilocality' of home draws attention to direction of travel as a mode of understanding complex symbolic reconstructions of nations. British returnee's from India are locked into a process of constructing and reconstructing home at varied points of a journey. Attachments to India and England are constantly re-visited and re-invented in relation to movement and activities including ritual acts and every day activities. This leads women to constantly re-imagine belongings negotiated through the lived experience of repatriation and loss. In terms of established theory,

Gowan's (2006) contribution points to the limitations of spatial distance as an explanation of sites of difference.

As already discussed, familial obligations are policed through the hierarchical arrangement of relations of difference and regulated through specific authoritative structures that include legislation and social policy. Reid's (2010:19) account of the organisation of homes in the Khrushchev era is one example. Home acts as a site to display a set of ideas about a private and intimate realm, but one that is shaped and reproduced through public meanings and cultural discourse. Architectural design reflects socialist principles of utility and function, whereas, the use of soft furnishings inflect collective values with a sense of individualism. By contextualizing material practices in the home alongside a socialist modernizing project, Reid (2010) reminds us that private actions can illuminate collective systems. In a related discussion, Kuhn (1995) also reminds us family is real and 'out there'. Using family photographs as a stimulus for remembering family secrets, Kuhn (1995) describes familial obligation as a place to uphold social and cultural values.

The postmodern framework offered by Sarup (2005) examines relationships at home that support that process. In Postmodern terms, modalities of otherness and strangeness reflect a deep rooted sense of being. Sarup (2005) articulates how homespace acts as the catalyst to progress identities. Identities are periodically put into a place, are momentarily fixed in meaning, and secure belongings. This positions homespace as an important site for operationalizing identities, yet its role in facilitating change is under-acknowledged. Homes is also located in place, an approach that favours Heidegger's (quoted in Sarup 1997) phenomenological approach to 'dwelling as being', giving place a key function in determining identity. Across the literature, locality and place are frequently articulated as an essential site, crafted along gendered or ethnic hierarchies and organised to function in a particular way.

For Mohanty (2003), context operates along similar lines, as a place that produces and shapes meaning in a particular time. Exploring common contexts, not supposing common meanings, locates collaborative feminist knowledge in the framework of a political struggle and avoids cultural reductionism (Alcoff 1995). Mills (2007) illustrates how localised meanings are captured as a product for political purposes and used by national government to articulate an exclusive set of meanings at the national level. In *Mahalle*, historical meanings are reconstructed. Through mundane acts of the everyday, Turkish women in the Mahalle reinforce a particular version of Turkish history, as a triumphant and

powerful nation. It also provides a point of orientation to mark out progressive Turkish identities. Women in the Mahalle did not live their lives in the past, but were tasked to bring about a particular version of that past. This contrived performance was fuelled by nostalgia and shaped by cultural memories. Mills (2007) demonstrates how linkages to an ancestral heritage, even with longstanding connections to a particular place, were often difficult to sustain.

Reflecting a larger body of work in the field of Cultural Studies and Critical Race Theory, Twine's (2004) exploration of home considers the cultural resources used by white British transracial birth parents. The concept of racial literacy is explained as the parental labour necessary for an anti-racist project and the cultural resources needed to ensure the emotional, political and cultural well-being of 'Black' children. Good parenting is therefore evaluated through an observation of micro-cultural processes undertaken at home (Twine 2004:885). I return to Hall's (2005) notion of preservation to consider the emphasis placed on mixed race households to operate as a location manufacturing discrete heritage. To discuss mixedness in this way is to lock families in a continuous battle between competing and contradictory interests, or to suggest that in certain circumstances culture can be acquired. Some of these difficulties are drawn out by Mohanty (2003) who considers how objectification results in an elision of the historical with material realities of histories. For white mothers this could lead to a blurring of what is constructed as Blackness, including an acknowledgement of the sexualized and racialised basis for that construction, with the realities of how life is lived as a person defined as Black.

Twine (2004, 2009) adopts this epistemological position in her analysis of mixed race households as spaces lacking in the cultural resources necessary to raise Black children. Young people must be taught the realities of racial division and can be supported in achieving this through proactive parenting including their involvement in Black groups and by living in urban spaces. She reasons that 'successful' white parents need to be consistent in developing 'strategies of resistance' and 'critical lessons of consciousness' to counter spatial isolation. This includes encouraging young people to identify with African or African Caribbean communities. Twine (2004) does not explore what categories mean or why young people may choose to inhabit or vacated particular identities. I return to Mohanty (2003) who reasons that when unitary categories are constructed they are inappropriately deployed as a far broader theoretical framework. I suggest there are some parallels here with mixed race young people and a failure to define meaning outside of these social relations. As argued elsewhere this position has tremendous implications for white birth

mothers of mixed race children in the way that it reinforces the dualism of essentialised identities or states of inbetweenness.

To move beyond this impasse I refer to the work of Van Kirk (1983). By focusing on family dynamics Van Kirk (1983) shows how fur trade society emerged as a distinctive self-perpetuating community, shaped by the shifting influences of its 'dual cultural roots' (Van Kirk, 1983:5). The value of Van Kirk's research is it begins in a space of mixedness and then works outwards. Interdependent benefits accrued to Indian women and European men. Private space operates as orientation, central to the fulfilment of personal belongings and to a sense of family security. By creating the necessary conditions for individual opportunity to be maximised, the economic and social status of trader families as a collective advanced. It was the arrival of European white women that underscored the re-emergence of class hierarchies and a racially pure family identity. The affect was to neutralise 'native' women's role in wider society and to re-establish racial distinctiveness by subsuming family members within discrete groups. The ordinariness of mixedness was challenged when juxtaposed with gendered cultural constructions of whiteness. An important point raised by Anthias (200:21) is to assert that you cannot belong to a collectivity if you do not conform to its gender norms. The assumption is that white mothers operate outside of that framework in mixed race households.

In this section, I have explored three themes: the politics of reproduction, national security and homespace. I used these dimensions to systematically demonstrate how gender is intimately connecting to nation building. I now go on to discuss how those themes connect to wider sociological theory by focusing on the concept of boundaries. I explore boundaries as a landscape through which collectives are constituted and signified, paying close attention to how gender is recruited to the process, to produce or sustain particular belongings. This is important as Jenkins (2004) suggests identification is embodied, acting as a referent for the individual and an index of collectivity.

Theorising Boundaries

In this section, I draw particular attention to the sociological significance of the Stranger and consider the contribution of sociological theory in defining boundary architecture. I examine how three different paradigms might shape our views on national belongings where they offer a number of possibilities for positioning white mothers as an insider, an outsider or a postmodern wanderer. By reframing postmodernism's concept of fluidity as a mode of movement that unsettles meanings, I juxtapose complexity as a place of infinite possibility,

against the lived experience of white mothering. I steer a course that draws attention to borders that appear more rigid than flexible. I use this framework to re-establish white mothers as core group members who continue to occupy a central role in boundary construction using pre-existing attachments, social networks, and prior socialization. Although this approach lends itself to contradictions and contingencies, the making and unmaking of categories raises questions about the extent by which transformation is at all possible or equally available to all.

Strangers at Internal Frontiers

By conceptualising the role of the Stranger, German sociologist Georg Simmel explores how difference is a recurring aspect of organised social structures. Using this theoretical proposition, Simmel (1908) proposed how core and peripheral positions emerge through mediation. Indeed, Simmel (1908) outlines a theory of interaction where difference operates to create and redefine commonality. What is similar about the group is merely the common identification of external differences. This seems to suggest that boundaries are consensus building zones and essential aspects of any collective architecture as opposed to residual spaces (Ethington 2005). The proposition is developed by drawing on the sociological concept of a stranger as a dynamic function of any collective. The stranger acknowledges the potential of differential positioning within a given location, and is a critical function of perspective. Using this conceptual model, Simmel (1908) explains how different aspects of identity are structured within a collective.

The critical insight Simmel provides is to conceive of difference in terms of that which is lacking and desirable to the group. This provides a general theory to reflect on how a dominant group manages heterogeneity. Expanding boundary zones facilitates a degree of movement, albeit restricted, whilst the core domain remains fairly insulated. Using this framework, Simmel (1908) demonstrates how difference is a necessary and positive group attribution. By appropriating difference, strangers infuse collectives with a sense of dynamism and group boundaries reform in the light of positive and reciprocal arrangements. Given that proposition it would seem absolutely necessary to bind the group in such a way to ensure that internal differences are minimised and that the group is imagined as fairly representative of its members. Simmel's (quoted in Wolf 1950) significant contribution is to consider that the point of interaction is also the boundary.

Simmel (1908) acknowledged forms of difference exist but does not craft out a space of otherness. What is equally unclear is how Simmel (1908) proposed the basis for decision making operates. How does the stranger field negative from positive influences? According to Simmel (quoted in Wolf 1950) strangers, acting as group members, mediate group differences at its borders. There is no account of how they are enabled to exercise autonomous decision-making. In fact, the consolidation of particular expressions of identities occurs through a unification process and gradual refinement of ideas rather than radical challenge. Where external space receives limited critical attention, external differences are those that have little impact on the collective. For Simmel (1908) the possibility that external strangers occupy a similarly interactive role is rejected ruling out the opportunity for cross border dialogue. What results is a framework for differentiating difference that convey little to no positive benefit or value. Group members would need both a reason and mechanism to categorise what is desirable.

What is equally unclear is how Simmel's (1908) stranger is integrated within the group. The role conveys a legitimacy to belong and a validated set of actions, but equally marks out the limits to inclusion. The paradox is to consider this position powerful in its ability to negotiate, but powerless if there is a restricted capacity for freedom of choice, or constraints operate as pre-established requirements. Which movements or identities are validated requires a deeper understanding of the dominant unifying principles and social roles that collectives demand of their members. Importantly, Simmel (quoted in Wolf 1950) identifies a second set of tensions where he reasons the significance of the particular is also the site of insignificance. Collectivities are somewhat contradictorily imagined as ambiguous and inconclusive states of being with firm foundations. Given this position it is difficult to deconstruct what the nation offers as a special site for belongings. For Simmel, exclusivity would be a difficult concept to sustain given that the signifiers that appear to indicate group membership could equally relate to any number of collectives. At any given point, sameness and difference will need to be re-negotiated and re-constructed.

What pressures provoke the re-negotiation of boundaries? I believe Simmel (1908) points to a constant state of flux and negotiation rather than a fixity and stillness that is shattered by change. In terms of discerning more or less important connections, boundaries seem to flex to accommodate change as opposed to rupture. The conundrum is to establish which changes can be accommodated and how boundaries withstand external pressure? Black British men may share strong connections to place with white mothers that make

cultural differences less easily locatable and visible difference more easily expressed. White mothers with first generation African partners may find cultural differences are brought sharply into focus. The point being, caution is needed to avoid collapsing the complexity of gendered, ethnic, and national belongings into rather singular accounts of visible difference, or in producing long lists of categories for independent analysis. Anthias (2007:70) reasons that to distinguish ethnicity as a cultural sphere and class in terms of material resource reveals a predisposition to compartmentalize divisions. The analytical value is in demonstrating the specific forms they take and the social value they produce.

It is possible that white mothers find value in adopting or adapting a particular cultural practice, or strategically deploy and confuse symbolic markers; dependent upon the context they operate from. This suggests the potential to construct and reconstruct belongings in terms of the value they generate. The tension is to see this as a benefit accruing to the group as opposed to any individual. For Simmel (quoted in Woolf 1950) some differences can be undesirable providing a space of contestation and challenge. Nothing has fixed and intrinsic meanings other than at the point at which they are objectified. From this, I draw the concept of being motionless, where to stand still is to be seen in a particular way. The benefit of such stillness is to propose that collectives have a material reality and a reassuring stability, to be enveloped by that identity. In many ways Simmel (1908) precipitates postmodern concerns with sedimentation, where individuals become trapped in historical modes of being with limited opportunity for change or creativity. Rather than passive bystanders, collectives position individuals in varying relationships to the core, with varying degrees of agency given over to them amidst a mass of differing interests. Likewise, it is possible that individuals act out a number of strategies to claim or contest a given location.

Strangers at the Limit Lines

When social psychologist Schutz (1944) writes, *Stranger an Essay in Social Psychology*, he perhaps reflects legitimate concerns with the idea of external border threats. A key position developed by Schutz (1944) is to claim that meaningful connections across cultures are impossible. Given the context for his work, it is unsurprising that in the post war period he would refocus on national interest and national boundaries. Discriminating against a white foreign-born enemy, or a Black or white allied troop, required a constant reassessment of stranger as friend and stranger as enemy. For Schutz (1944) meaning is constituted through relations of distance and remoteness leading to the emergence of natural limits to interior spaces. Strangers are individuals

immersed into forms of difference that are unassimilated at an individual level. Despite high visibility, boundaries remain exclusive and inaccessible to outsiders. Schutz (1944) is arguing that group culture pre-exists members joining and remains fundamentally unaltered by their presence.

Culture is used to mark out belongings and provide group members with recognisable access points. What Schutz (1944) does not address is diversity within groups. In his scheme, 'origin' and 'behaviour' provide the sourcebook for members to share 'trustworthy recipes' and the necessary means to orientate the social world (Schutz 1944:499). This form of exclusivity suggests a structure not unlike a 'closed club'. Established pathways enable particular individuals to function. Consequently, culture cannot be learnt or acquired, but is given over to particular individuals as an innate characteristic of a particular social grouping. In Schutz (1944) is there a possibility for mixed race children to claim legitimate belonging if they are born of English mothers and socialised into 'English/British culture'?

This is a crucial development, as he acknowledges culture plays a pivotal role in negotiating everyday life but requires a sophisticated programme at work to distinguish valid from inauthentic use. Difference needs to be authentically different to avoid conflation with ordinariness, but not so different as to be disruptive. This is why Schutz (1944) claims discrete sets of cultural practices differ across groups but are similar within. A theory of social distance indicates natural boundaries develop at sites of difference leading to the notion that meaningful connections across cultures are impossible, due to naturally occurring differences. A key theoretical development is to propose that culture takes on an unchanging and static materiality, which can only be transmitted between legitimate group members. Culture cannot be learnt or acquired, where it is given over to particular individuals as an innate characteristic of a particular social grouping. In his writing, culture is decontextualized and designated as particular to a particular social group. This positions culture as a fixed product of the interior and a tool for negotiating everyday life.

Schutz (1944) reasons that boundary positions are not spaces of critical perspective and exchange, but spaces where 'thinking as usual' occurs. Insider space promotes ideas rather than represents an aggregation of them. Hence, social organisation is determined by static modes of interpretation and reference points. At the point of transgression, where insider and outsider meet, outsiders enter a labyrinth of discrepancies and discontinuities, where the once familiar is now experienced as strange. Schutz (1944) demonstrates an incoherent state,

as the stranger cannot integrate new knowledge and familiarity into a coherent system of interpretation. This offers collective belongings a form of immunity, in that it configures and anchors groups to a particular way of being, by blindly doing. This theoretical approach has particular relevance for white mothers, as it limits how their relationships can be understood, and creates the idea of dislocation. Schutz (1944) developed this discussion through his treatment of objectivity and reasons as a perspective it is compromised by subjective frames of reference and individual biographies. At the point at which difference is recognised it is no longer understandable.

By contrasting these two theoretical approaches, Simmel (1908) and Schutz (1944) demonstrate fundamental differences. How and where boundaries are located differ, as does the role of strangers in those constructions. In taking us to borderlines, Simmel (1908) used sites of strangeness to mark out limit lines. Strangers operate at interior frontiers negotiating for the good of the collective making boundaries dynamic zones and potential sites for expansion. I read in Schutz (1944) a different boundary configuration where borders are extremities. Strangers are positioned at outer edges and point to discontinuous or incompatible belongings. Difference becomes threatening and potentially harmful to the collective. Simmel's (1908) theoretical framework needs to interpret difference once it has been identified. A stranger must establish what is different and determine what benefit or use value this form of difference offers to the collective. Schutz (1944) accords the stranger a role as a gatekeeper, marking pre-established boundaries that are non-negotiable and easily locatable. Codifying difference stabilises difference by maintaining boundaries in relation to pre-established classification systems. At the margins, boundary spaces are considered valueless and subsequently operate as points of detachment. Schutz (1944) requires a theoretical framework that can examine how you see and understand what is known to you and has become commonplace, and equally, how to theorise what is not known to you.

I return to Jenkins who suggests a 'fault line' marking philosophical approaches that prioritise subjective or objective accounts of being (Jenkins, 2006:80). Although both Simmel (quoted in Wolf 1950) and Schutz (1944) show these contrasting positions, together they support the idea that strangers have the capacity for reflection. Strangers bring into view a number of perspectives when they are consigned the role of boundary markers. Using these different configurations, boundaries appear to be social systems to enable and encourage movement for genuine members, whilst operating a system that reinforces the marginalisation of other. Whether interactions occur at interior frontiers or outer

edges may be significant in shaping identities. So how can we understand white mothers location as a dimension of distance, when sameness and difference occur within the same space? In strangeness there is a freedom to think differently or withdraw into a state of familiarity. My findings explore what white mothers invest in and the type of investment they are willing to make. I use these texts to suggest that boundaries have a depth of form that calls for more detailed examination of their characteristics. They produce different types of on-going boundary maintenance, in different arenas, undertaken by different gatekeepers.

Contemporary research on migration and transnational networks explores a number of these issues. A growing body of research centres on the concept of transnational ties to illustrate the way that lives are lived across borders of two or more nation states (Bokland 2003, Cunningham and Heyman 2004)). This work also points to a series of belongings that emerge within and because of borders. These developments include attention to state making as locally embedded processes. Toyota (2003) demonstrates how ethnic identities, of migrant populations, demonstrates a broader sense of belongingness. He examines social identity formation among the minority peoples who span the frontier zones of China, Burma and Thailand. Migrants sustain networks of connections to familial, economic, religious, and political ties in home countries whilst also procuring opportunities in host countries that might provide advantageous conditions. Toyota (2003) also illustrates how ethnic identity is categorised differently in those contexts. Arguably, there are parallels for white mothers who straddle near and far.

Postmodern Strangers

By the close of the century, postmodern theory favoured a stronger affiliation to individual expressions of meaning and a reconceptualization of boundaries as spaces to journey over. Borderlands provide a theoretical framework to challenge conventional notions of culture, space, place, and identity. Post modernism conceives of place as landscapes of new possibility and sites of unexplored potential (Bauman 1997, Cunningham & Heyman, Sarup 2005). This approach enables us to theorise movement. We return to the notion of strangers but one that is reconfigured through identity. In Derridian terms, strangers are undecidables, the dimensions that refuse categorisation and occupy an ambiguous status (Royle 2003:5) Postmodernism positions strangers and strangeness as spaces that reside within us all as sites for exploration (Sarup 1996, Bauman 1997). This assigns strangers a maverick quality and shifts our

focus to consider borderlands as zones of activity rather than vacuous empty spaces.

What Postmodernism achieves is to focus our attention on boundaries as ambiguous and messy zones, as aspects of social life where new flexibilities and flows make it difficult to capture what happens there. In examining the literature Cunningham and Heyman (2004:291) point to a blurring in analytical quality as border literature appears to meld historical empiricism with the more symbolic use of borders. One way to interpret that is to consider how mixed race households may be places to identify difference, as the coming together of different signs and symbols, but not necessarily a place to locate it. I interpret this as meaning ordinariness within the household is overshadowed by the historical, political and economic conditions required by nation building. What Bauman (1996:9) identifies is a significant shift in thinking, where identity is seen as a location not a sense of being. Hence, being in a crowd does not necessarily make you part of that crowd (Bauman 1996:9). Having a Black partner and a mixed race child does not necessarily mean you are part of a Black community, conversely it does not indicate Englishness was an identity that white mothers actively claimed. What he is proposing is that not all identities will be taken up. You may be painted by a particular context that frames a reality that is not real (Bauman 1996:29). To understand white mothering means moving away from individuals in mixed households to concentrate on the systems that support those identifications.

If strangeness operates as a principle for thinking about universal claims, strangers occupy a privileged ontological status, but this needs to be tempered by an acknowledgement of the restrictions that block or impede movement (Cunningham & Heyman 2004). Understanding how boundaries enable or impede manoeuvrability, and for whom and in what direction, needs to consider a whole range of under-examined factors including, in this case, white mothers role in the construction of those boundaries. This forces us to focus in more detail on the relationship between mobility and movement. One of the ways this has been addressed is through a reconsideration of the role of the stranger, marking a shift in the relationship between friend and enemy (Balibar 2006, Sarup 1997). As friends, strangers are positioned as physically close, yet emotionally remote. Enemies are threatening identities that seek to undermine the collective. Balibar (2006) develops this point to understand deteriorating relationships to the other, and wider perceptions of change in the European Union (Balibar 2006). Strangers no longer signify boundaries between groups but occupy a position, which blurs their view of each other. In certain circumstances a partial view

might indicate a blurring of distinctiveness, whereas Sarup (2005) points to an enhanced zone of operation, the appropriation of space and the realignment of borderlines.

When movement is conceptualised as progress, the role and function of boundary negotiation would be to shift positionality. Bauman (1997) reasons the need for agency exists beyond discourse providing an enriched role for the stranger. In postmodern terms, travellers are not newcomers temporarily out of place, but eternal wanderers making active choices. With multiple configurations, the vagabond, tourist, player, and pilgrim, represent strangeness as a means for individuals to journey through life. Where pathways are multidirectional there can be no sense of moving in the right direction, only movement. The pilgrim's search for the Promised Land is now a mission to avoid sedimentation and a liability to break free from. Yet greyness and messy zones make difference more diffuse and transformation less dramatic. Strangers risk becoming lost in unmarked zones. For Bauman, multiplicity suggests that postmodern society has lost deep and meaningful connections (Bauman 1997:33). This conforms to Simmel's (quoted in Wolf 1950) view of insiders in terms of mobility, but not in terms of dislocation.

As previously discussed, the freedom to manoeuvre across borders does not indicate that borders have moved but might indicate how different individuals find ways to access over them (Alba 2005, Klodawsky 2006). Understanding how movement is produced and experienced is an important element of border research. In Postmodern terms, borderlands are spaces to move through to other locations and destinations, not final destinations. Who can move and where to, requires far greater understanding of the social capital available to individuals and the personal investment strategies they are willing to make, alongside national investment levels in enforcement. I believe the thesis begins to draw out this relationship in the way it considers policy documents and the movement of national borders, alongside white mothers narratives concerning movement at national borders.

I also draw attention to the concept of strangeness as a marker for difference. Drawing on Weber, Bauman (1997) argues boundaries are unmarked and creative spaces that reside within us all as spaces of emptiness from which we are reborn and transformed. The desert metaphor provides for a sense of emptiness; space without contours where identities are stripped bare, and boundaries represent unmarked sites of possibility (Bauman 1997). Strangeness is a form of anonymity claimed through choice that acts as a precursor to change

rather than passive silence. As discussed by Anderson (1983), anonymity is as a form of connectedness and continuity. Several feminist authors describe anonymity and visibility as dimensions of movement, that enable women to enter different zones without being challenged. I make particular reference to the work of Klodawsky (2002, 2006) to demonstrate how the limiting effect of imagination acts as a constraint on what is possible. In her study of female homelessness, the ability to manoeuvre across different terrains was constrained by patriarchal constructions of woman's role in the home. This ideology was deployed in ways that made them either visible or invisible in residential locations. I interpret this choice as a strategy to manage change during transformation. I also interpret Friedman's (1999:8) use of the term 'locational feminism' as a form of anonymity. This proposes borders are spaces of enforced silence and miscommunication, which act to protect by confinement. Yet, I suggest they mark an important shift in how we understand the concept of borders and marginality by striking these spaces as areas of forced interaction.

Within border research movement is underpinned by a number of different theoretical approaches. As discussed elsewhere, feminist scholars consider movement within the context of unequal structures of power. In terms of white mothering, gender and its relationship to ethnicity and sexuality are important factors. Being able to manoeuvre across different terrains suggests insiders and outsiders use boundaries differently. In her study of Crevecoeur writings of incipient American ethnicity, early immigrants who moved to America were not faced with exclusion at its borders, but from the processes of inclusion that would facilitate their belonging (Alvaz Saar 1993). There are strong connections here to the barriers identified by Schutz (1944). Those who would not conform to the dominant cultural practices were 'cast offs', suggesting a process of filtering acceptable candidates in line with group criteria. But there is also the possibility that individuals remain wholly outside of the process. This proposition calls for a deeper understanding of the types of movements that occur.

The movements across boundaries that Schutz (1944) and Alva Saar (1993) discuss involve individuals who are seeking a permanent status change. I argue it is the notion of permanence that forces boundaries to erupt exposure. In postmodern theory the concept of fluidity suggests temporary movements. The difficulties for white mothers in achieving a settled status are explored in the archival chapter. Arguably, this tension forms the substantive basis for research on diasporic belongings amongst immigrant communities. I link these struggles to the work of Bauman (1997:33) who claims that elsewhere is a place to find home but in a re-imagined way. Using the metaphor of a tourist, Bauman (1997)

suggests that what are needed are short-term fixes and sites of rejuvenation. A strangeness yes, but one that resembles and invokes the familiar. The characterization of white mothers in serial Black relationships might be understood using this framework. Likewise, there are strong parallels with mothering a child imagined as other. The child is a permanent marker, whereas being in a mixed relationship may be considered less so. In these circumstances, retreating into familiarity may be difficult to achieve.

In journeying, the tourist finds a sense of safety in configurations of home, but also finds the restrictions that drove him away. Hence for Bauman (1997) boundaries are approached strategically and offer positions of aspiration and hope for the future. Yet, they equally embody a disjuncture with a past, and dissatisfaction with a present. For Southern white women, the return of white males to the political economy represented a return to gendered norms, but also facilitated white women regaining a preferred status. For some women that was important (Faust 2000:242). Using this analogy, white mothers would move to boundary positions to reconstruct what is meaningful in a new context and discard what they considered to be of little value. Arguably, exploring white mothering as a dimension of mixed race family life provides for new expressions of location, where marginal sites allow for a significant exploration of what is significant and meaningful. This considers the stranger in action. I believe Chapter 5 and 6 will help draw out a deeper understanding of the specific contexts where white mothers' decision making is challenged or validated.

My concern was to interrogate the composition and structure of boundaries, which I felt, was needed in order to understand how boundaries, borderlands, frontiers, edges and core could operate as fundamentally different zones. According to Jenkins (2008:13), the challenge for postmodernity is a too hard, too soft nature to identity. Essential connotations and constructivist qualifiers have undermined its value and importance to social theory. For Yuval Davis (2005) movement can be destabilizing, suggesting individuals may reach back for firmer footings to navigate a pathway through. Building on this argument, Cunningham & Heyman (2004) discuss the over generalisation of border theory as a failure to distinguish the social and material dimensions of border movement. In developing some understanding of the status of white mothering, the analytical quality that boundaries provide is blurred by changeable definitions of nations as a social, political and material process. I conclude from the literature that boundaries represent similarity and difference, convergence and departure. To pursue this point, I draw attention to white mothering as the point where essential and constructed accounts conjoin.

Class may emerge as a significant factor in differentiating experiences. This was a particularly strong focus of early urban ethnographic studies. In my introductory chapter, I cite a number of British historical anthropological studies that reveal the internal dynamics of imagined and constructed communities. They craft a set of national identities by focusing on particular interior spaces as 'urban enclaves' (Little 1947, Collins 1955). 'Racialised relations' hinged on a notion that minority communities sustained national, racial and ethnic identities that belonged elsewhere. 'Other' became distinguishable from the surrounding areas as the chaotic lifestyles of immigrant families rather than the degraded landscapes they occupied. These interior zones were codified as foreign landscapes rather than transitional sites for migrants to move through (Little 1947, Collins 1955, Glass 1967, Benson 1981). Much of this early research gave rise to a politics of visibility and the racialisation and social segregation of communities along ethnic and faith based lines.

These differential theoretical frameworks lead us to conclude that the positionality of white mothers is not entirely clear. It seems very much dependent on the status and aspirations accorded to the stranger. On the one hand, white mothers remain white and on 'home' soil, constructing and reconstructing nation alongside other white women. Yet, extant theory proposes a degraded status imposing the idea of entrapment, barred or blocked mobility. As feminist scholars have demonstrated, the notion of marginality is linked to the use of power to render subjects or symbols in a particular relationship to the core (Harding 1987, Mohanty 2003, Yuval Davis & Anthias 2005). Women's capacity to negotiate in these spaces may be constrained by factors outside of their immediate control. The slippery nature of identity suggests closer attention should be paid to particular intersections if we want to understand processes behind inclusion and exclusion. Where there are contingencies there is equally the possibility of inconsistencies. I argue that the interaction of gender, whiteness and class may be a complicating factor.

I have demonstrated through the work of Simmel (1908) Schutz (1944) and a number of postmodern theorists (Bauman 1997, Sarup 2005), how social theory is concerned with boundaries as spaces to manage different interests and discriminate between heterogeneous influences that may be problematical, from those that infuse groups with a sense of dynamism. I suggested that the ontological position occupied by white mothering is problematical where social actors demonstrate participation in the complex process of border construction and deconstruction. In choosing to anchor otherness within the group, they act

as an expression of the group. Using privileged white identities they retain the capacity for return crossings and constant movement between interior/exterior landscapes and occupy preferential spaces that meet their needs. By articulating sameness and difference they transform space and in those moments new identities are not just possible but actively claimed. I draw this chapter to a close by considering how women lay down on place the essential foundations for nations. I consider the role of culture, ethnicity and whiteness as symbolic systems of signification.

The Role of Culture in Boundary Formation

In his influential text, Williams (1958) appears to tackle the question of complex cultural belongings and meanings head on. His theoretical model places primacy on examining historical systems of meaning that convey wider messages about status and positionality. By surveying the landscapes of his youth Williams (1958) points to continuities and discontinuities over time. Connectivity is inscribed on the surrounding landscapes, vernacular and infrastructure, through political institutions and social processes that exist within every society. Williams (1958) theorises how individuals embrace culture as a form of allegiance and focal point for what is common to the group, whilst simultaneously mark the place where difference occurs as a source of individuality. Where Williams (1958) differs from Schutz (1944) is to conclude that groups are expressed through cultural symbols and particular social relations, but not ones that necessarily reflect group culture.

Despite his acknowledgement of the manufacturing of particular symbols, Williams reads the locality in a particular way to achieve his belonging in that place. There is an overarching narrative of English history, which he feels intimately connected to, a dominant narrative of class division and a sub narrative of proud working class identities. What his writing might suggest is that individuals corral support for particular belonging claims and possibly to re-negotiate the terms of their membership. Yet, which resources do individuals draw on and how do they use them? I reason that provenance, legitimacy and authenticity draw out shared understandings of membership and access rights, which in turn shifts the debate to consider under what circumstances can cultural resources be used and by who? As Schutz (1944) argued, access to resources may not equate with belonging where meaning remains unknowable. How culture is used refocuses our attention on behaviour as an important marker of belonging.

By asserting that only those who can decode culture in a particular way can make claims to understand its value, culture represents an increasingly sophisticated form of exclusivity (Featherstone 2000, Nagel 2003). By definition, the intrinsic value given over to these particular cultural symbols conveys an incentive to inhabit particular identities and a belief that they can be strategically deployed. Categorising mixed race children as 'white other' may be one example of this. Cultural theorists claim the key ideas underpinning collective formation are mobilised through language, culture and institutions (Williams 1958:6). At one level, these symbols are accessible to everyone. Williams (1958) indicates a degree of individual choice, to be enveloped by ordinary structures and common practices, or to flesh out points at which meanings are unknowable or unassimilated. Writing at a similar time and equally informed by a Marxist Structuralist framework, Lefebvre (1957) challenges this proposition, stating that only those who belong to a dominant group have the option to remake the symbols on the basis of their use value. Lefebvre (1957) reasons that individuals are locked into a hierarchical system of established privileges and disbenefits. He gives over to culture the power to alienate despite it appearing accessible to all.

The posturing of culture as a form of exclusivity is problematic for Williams (1958). He reflects on the role of cultural symbols as access points. In his example, Williams (1958) reasons his Cambridge University education was emblematic of cross cutting cultural attitudes towards education, not elitism, or class based privilege. He juxtaposes acceptance in a well regarded academic institution against awkward feelings of disjuncture and historical re-enactment in a teashop. Both experiences purport to be 'high culture' but Williams discriminates against his Tea Shop experience as the re-articulation of an imagined past disconnected from real life (Williams 1958:7). He draws attention to the contrived nature of culture, which paves the way for a discussion about the differential value base of cultural representations. What I think is important here is to consider if Williams is discussing a shift in the user, not necessarily of the signifier itself? I return to Hall (2005) to elaborate discriminatory practices. The themes introduced in his research suggest that the racial imaginary sets out collective limitations. In his example, contemporary works of art fashioned by Black artists are sidelined to an annual production of ethnic work, rather than integrated within a wider body of contemporary British work.

Using this theoretical framework, symbols seem to have a degree of flexibility, but their flexing capacity is constrained by what is desirable. Clearly collectives do not respond to all change in a consistent manner. Periods of rapid social

change and instability may force collectives to reconfigure membership. This could result in a shift in composition, including those who were located in the boundaries and were previously marginal, or excluding those considered deviant from the core to the margins. As part of a broader strategic and political function borders must be able to accommodate features they do not necessarily possess, but aspire to. Arguably, this creates the conditions for the cultural imaginary and social antagonism. Drawing on Lacan, those with aspirational identities may move away from boundary positions and locate themselves at entry points where membership will be re-negotiated. Williams (1958) develops this idea through the seductive qualities of illusion, to invoke as laws and symbols culture as being common to a group. In this sense '*artificialdom*' is a useful term derived from Lefebvre (1957) that makes explicit and possible mystification and contrived acts.

There are links here with Anderson's (1983) later work on the imagined community, pointing to the centrality of imagination in processes of identification and belonging. I reason this likens imagination to a place of untapped possibilities. Yet, feminist scholarship equally demonstrates the impact of gendered constructions of body and space that constitute in the imagination a set of limiting factors. In McClintock's (2004) discussion of the Volk, white women's relationship to an emergent national identity lay in her unpaid services and sacrifice to her husband and family. This points out a number of difficulties associated with the concept of transformation. Imagining 'empty lands' supports the re-envisioning of South Africa as a legitimate ancestral home for White Afrikaners, rather than an act of appropriation. Aspirations for a mixed identity may emulate similar practices drawing on conditions already laid down on that space. What is significant here is how group processes are fundamental in shaping the collective imaginary and how central the performance of gendered dynamics are to that configuration.

For white mothers the racial imaginary may operate in a similar manner, creating blind spots in a sourcebook from which to construct racial composites. White mothers' narratives may draw on racialised discourse where no other language opportunities seem to exist to talk about difference. How can we interpret this? Equally, white mothers' experience may suggest that difference is less easily articulated than imagined. The space between the imagined and the imaginary comes sharply into view when juxtaposed alongside state surveillance and regulation that denies white mothers the right to fashion families of their own making. A tense debate centres cultural acquisition and an unequal distribution of resources. Reay et al (2007) consider multicultural education as an appropriation of minority cultural resources along these lines. There is concern

that white middle class parents appropriate 'minority heritage' as a commodity to be valued in the market place, but offer little in the way of reciprocal arrangements. Children attending urban schools cash on unearned benefits and use them as a form of cultural capital. Class difference is a significant factor missing from current work in the field of mixedness. For Anthias (2002:17) when culture is conceived of as social capital this is problematical.

Signifying Otherness: The Role of Ethnicity

In the next section, I consider the significance of ethnicity and ethnic identification to national belongings. Barth (1969) marked a shift in the debate by considering the role of culture is valuable where it marks an important development in theorising group formation claiming that culture marks out division between boundaries, but is not a constituent of them. Culture is no longer considered a fact of birthright and boundaries no longer form a relatively static and homogenous account of different group practices. Given growing ethnic complexity in European nations, Barth's (1969) thesis considers how ethnic identities emerge as fundamentally distinct and how ethnic boundaries persist over time. He draws on anthropological studies concerned with the position of immigrant groups in Norway. Barth's (1969) concern is with establishing how symbolic meanings and interpretations are attached to social actions and environments. I interpret Barth as suggesting what we do and where we do it is important. In linking this to white mothers, the behavioural aspects reveal contingencies in ethnic identity formation. White mothers demonstrate whiteness and Englishness but undermine the values attached to those categories through their challenging and inappropriate behaviours.

For Barth (1969), a key point was to recognise that ethnic segregation and containment do not explain ethnic diversity or difference. Diversity creates a differentiated value base within a collective and this provides the essential foundations for the development of an ethnic group. Ethnic identity interaction and exchange are considered fundamental to a collective's sustainability. The important point is not whether discrete values and practices exist amongst different ethnic groups, but how groups organise to express ethnic identities. Nazroo (2010) concludes that diversity with ethnic groups exists reflecting demographic factors and despite the commonalities and patterns in ethnic minority structures that exist across ethnic groups. Barth's (1969) academic interest is to explore persistence and exclusivity as the outcomes of interaction. He proposed how group membership is validated in relation to the location of internal boundaries and reinforced when they are contested. In keeping with

these ideas, Barth (1969:96) moves away from a Durkheimian structural functionalist approach, that over solidified groups as social facts, to consider questions of process. This problematises the notion of group distinctiveness and fixed boundaries claiming how people are recruited into groups is important. Through Barth (1969) we move closer to considering boundaries as zones of activity between competing collectives rather than sharp edges.

Returning to my earlier discussion about stillness, Barth (1969) reasons stability draws attention to how interaction is organised and structured to maintain ethnic division. What he is arguing is that boundaries do not emerge at points of difference but are placed strategically to mark out those differences. Where borders are positioned marks the limits to potential belongings, meaning limits to the elements that groups might consider valuable. What develops through his approach is a rationale for undertaking boundary work. Individual members undertake essential border maintenance to avoid the discrepant behaviour of others leading to boundary collapse (Barth 1969:18). A significant role, given over to gatekeepers, is to constrain behaviours and re-establish borders, sometimes incorporating an element of change. What is not clear is how individuals are positioned within a collective to assume this role. Given this position it is interesting to note Barth (1969) does not consider a gendered analysis of boundary formation is equally important.

In his discussion, Barth (1969) sets out the range and sphere of relationship possibilities as a set of restrictive covenants. Zones are formalised to delineate the type of interaction that can occur between groups and where. Drawing on empirical research, economic exchange is crucial as a site of interaction between nations. Religion and domestic arrangements were 'off limits' and remain insulated domains. In his discussions, 'strategic interaction' avoids the field of interethnic sexual relationships. What he fails to address is how these discussions occur or who leads on them. Historically, interracial intimacies have been termed illegal or dangerous acts and regularly feature as high profile acts of betrayal. In the Colonial era interracial intercourse remained the sexual interface between whiteness and 'other' (Stoler 2001). A vast body of work documents Colonial contact zones and the eroticisation of the ethno sexual frontier despite cultural condemnation and legal jurisprudence (Callendar 1987, Hall & O.Rose 2006, Nagel 2003, Stoler 1991, 1992, 1995). This creates the conditions for nationalism to become embroiled in a heated exchange over sexual and tender ties.

In a similar vein, white mothering is represented as an attack on the ethnic basis on which national identity is constructed rather than an ordinary relationship between two individuals. The effect is a blurring of a private intimate act with a public expression of allegiance. I link this to a somewhat controversial claim where Barth (1969) identifies ethnic identity as a constellation of status operating across all situations and identity that cannot be disregarded. Is Barth suggesting that ethnic identities are less negotiable than other dimensions? I question whether constraints operate for all members of a shared ethnicity in the same way. What constraints operate for English men if they are white and middle class? In Callaway (1987) there is a clear account of how gender acts as a constraining factor in the context of Empire. Writing about a similar context, Nagel (2003:10) draws our attention to sexual ideologies used to define class, or ethnic 'other', in relation to the valorised sexual practices of a dominant group. In the case of interracial intimacy, a consensus seems to operate across ethnic groups. This raises complex questions about the relationship between ethnic and national identifications. It remains unclear if Englishness is both an ethnic and national identity.

Alba (2005) creates the conditions for ethnic difference to remain tempered by external interactions with multiple social dimensions across time and place. Under these circumstances identities locate in advantageous spaces or multiple contexts and in a different relationship to, or on behalf of, the collective. His research demonstrates how second generation immigrants pose a different set of border challenges than experienced by their ethnically matched parents, due to their socialisation in a 'receiving society'. The boundaries remain the same but some find a route through. This seems to suggest that boundary transformation is contingent on the complexity of presenting boundaries and how densely those borderlines are layered and constructed. This refocuses our attention on what happens at boundaries as opposed to who you are. Alba (2005) discusses rites of passage as how individuals react to boundaries and whether they sense they have the skills and resources to successfully manoeuvre over or through. What Alba (2005:21) begins to develop is a framework to understand why 'boundary affect' may not consistently impact all in the same way.

Barth (1969) addressed a similar set of concerns when questioning if ethnic identities emerge as fundamentally distinct. Writing from a more diverse context, Alba (2005) accounts for the persistence of ethnic identities by locating home as a site for their manufacture, but a changing public landscape where ethnic identities are navigated through intergenerational change. What Nazroo (2010:903) reasons is that to understand identity we need to address agency and

structure as well as additional dimensions of gender and class. So he does not discount Barth's (1969) suggestion that ethnicity is contingent on a range of factors in need of consensus building. The suggestion being made is that group membership can be re-classified through the collective re-identification of difference. Much like Schutz (1944), this talks of the expulsion or 'outing' of ambivalent forms of difference if they are considered to convey little or no value, or conversely of the appropriation of worth. In effect agreement on the big principles allows individuals freedom over the detail of everyday lives. Clearly, it is not always the case that individuals respond to categories of ascription and self-identification. Nazroo (2010:904) reasons when operating within an incoherent or insecure status local identities become strengthened or cultural traditions revised. This provides a framework for thinking about the belongings that white mothers create as flexible decisions relating to specific contexts. Periodically such differences place pressure on particular boundaries and it is in these moments that ambiguity erupts leading to boundary consolidation or reconstruction.

Much like the Trojan horse, white mothers harbour strangeness and the possibility that strangers lay dormant within interior spaces. If belonging is linked to particular ethnic patterning then these women pose a direct challenge to the theoretical principles linking nation to ancestral origins, bloodlines and birthright. If the bodies of white English women convey an essential truth about identity claims, then the principles upon which group membership is founded is destabilised. By propelling ethnic complexity into the group, the preservation of exclusivity and privilege for some is challenged. Anthias and Yuval Davis (2005) also complicate the notion of birthright and expose how origin can exist in a number of places. Emotional dimensions to belonging are felt, experienced, or activated through ascribed or self-defined identities. In doing so, birthright may not be a good enough measure of belonging or non-belonging. One example of this is Lewis's (2005) work on the status of immigrant women resident in the United Kingdom. Despite birthing children to the nation, they offer unstable ethnic measures. In terms of white mothering there are clear parallels in the experience and positionality of mixed race children who bear all the markers of place of origin and cultural capital but are constructed through politically and legally constituted ideas about dominant and minority groups and citizenship rights.

Whiteness as Belonging

In this concluding section, I focus on the messy production of whiteness and the way in which it continues to operate in a British, post Empire, post-Colonial

context. I argue that the whiteness of white mothering awkwardly jars with collective understandings of Englishness as whiteness, or of whiteness underpinning a model of collectivity. Hall (2005:5) argues that space can be plural and diverse but is equally patterned, such that individuals relate to that space in their own way but always form part of it. If whiteness operates as a salient dimension of the dominant group, then in that place, visible difference would operate as a natural system to externalise other. This process would occur regardless of other connections and commonalities shared by the group. I contend that this position is not at all clear. Both national rhetoric and English ethnic identities are sufficiently vague to facilitate a gulf between a national and a localised discourse of belonging.

In Bonnett's research (2000), we find the historical and geographical justification for linking white racial identities to the organisation of European nations and the huge investment made in sustaining European whiteness. There are two primary mechanisms that support this process. Firstly, is the assumed invisibility and normalised status of whiteness that creates an unquestioned affect on intergroup relations. A second rationale is the embodiment of white cultural practice as the national benchmark of belonging. What Bonnett (2000) argues, is that Europeans read whiteness as both a natural category and a central site of identity formation. Although the politics of whiteness envelops nations, the relationship between those linkages is under articulated. The contours of whiteness are in fact shaded zones, interwoven with relations of gender, class and ethnicity, to protect multifaceted systems of exclusivity. There is evidence of localized conditions of whiteness emerging. Variants, including Englishness, are reclaimed from a European whiteness, suggesting that collectives have the capacity to appropriate distance and difference for their own ends. Equally, these accounts could represent the demise in importance of nationality.

A number of scholars argue that to be English is to claim a particular form of whiteness, suggesting the limitations to whiteness are intrinsically linked to national status (Bonnett 2000). In Vron Ware's (1999) research, white working class femininity symbolised a racially defined community in the Isle of Dogs. White working class identities are legitimated in accounts of life in London's docklands (Vron Ware 1999). For Twine (1996) whiteness was culturally enacted as race neutrality in affluent European American suburbs. She describes the importance of conforming to a middle class, suburban and American identity to achieve belonging. What both accounts discuss is how gender and class are mobilised through constructions of whiteness, in relation to a particular place. Cultural codes are maintained and identifiable through

clothing, language, local social networks and the use of space. Indeed, both authors discuss movement between a private and public space that invokes the use of informal and formal strategies of differentiation. For Twine (2004), movement into public institutions was a site of identity realization, where bi racial girls' who had grown up in suburban white communities became Black. For Vron Ware (1999), difference manifest through white women's active negotiation over non-racialised private space and the border patrols they undertook.

Bush (1999) provides documentary evidence of the intense investment and interventions necessary to construct and maintain particular ideological versions of Englishness across the British Empire and at home. This is a privileged identity infused with class status and place and constructed through tightly controlled gender relations. In Callaway's (1987) research, the freedoms of white nursing staff in Africa were under surveillance and sanctioned. In Bush's (1999) examination of Colonial social relations in Africa, she considered how the social meanings attached to whiteness were historically contingent and point to an unresolved relationship with Englishness. To some degree, as Warnke (2007:67) suggests, this ambivalent status reflects the malleability of categories and so provides Englishness with an underlying ability for reinvention. Given this possibility, white mothering might not transcend a given identity, but transform the meanings attached to a particular set of signifiers.

What Levine (2003) adds to this discussion is twofold. Firstly, she identifies how Englishness was subsumed within other forms of whiteness, pointing to an indistinctive nationality. White women's involvement in prostitution shaped how Englishness could be talked about. Levine (2003:263) talks about the slippage between European and English whiteness that leads to the blurring of synonymous and crucial distinctions. The social location that women occupied was central to an ideology of domination, as central sites for the construction of racial whiteness, but subjugated by virtue of their gender (Bonnett 2000:26). The prostitutes that Levine writes of stood midway between whiteness and its absence. This discourse of displacement is strongly connected with the archival documents I consulted. In their treatment of white women in relationships with Black men as prostitutes and by aligning these women with 'coloured quarters', they became dislocated from white society. Levine (2003) demonstrates how borders operate as managed zones placing difference under the microscope. Borders function as spaces for ordering, which I liken to holding zones, where different versions and possibilities are played out.

This leads me to question if visible difference is the organising principle it appears to be. Bonnett (2000) proposes whiteness conveys a physical signifier that is neither the sole nor the most important element of whiteness. To some degree this idea can be detected in the work of extreme right groups. Arguably, the notion of racial degeneration is a central organising principle in mainstream and far right politics and in varying in degrees of explicitness. In many cases, exclusion and rejection is expressed in more complex and subtle ways than visible difference alone can encompass. In Fielding's (1981:91) study of racial ideology in the National Front, what stood in for non belonging and specific grounds for exclusion, were general relations of strangeness including the cultural attributes of members. Women actively involved in the hate movement similarly demonstrate this. The importance of this work, as Blee (2000) points out, is to demonstrate an important paradox. Whiteness positions women at the very heart of the collective, yet perversely as a minority group within it.

This tension in positionality is discussed by Blee (2000), as the contradictory positions attaching to the significance of whiteness, amongst white American females. In racist social organisations, patriots enact a model of nationalism through an expansion of the gendered roles assigned to them. Collaboration, recruitment and participation in military style activities, melds with the group's core functions and operational structure, which is to safeguard whiteness. Equally evident was a 'back office' function in which women carried out the everyday actions of being a white American wife. These gendered performances include supporting husbands to carry out essential duties and raising the nation's next generation of racist children. Blee (2000) reveals how women attached significance to the metaphors used by the wider population, but enacted, embodied and performed them in different ways. In this case, they forged strong links to the nation through family, whiteness and place, but in ways that still lead to their margin positioning.

One way to interpret this is to consider a relationship between gender, culture ethnicity and nation building. Not only is this invested in women's safekeeping but also requires a mechanism to differentiate the genuine from the counterfeit user. This differentiation gives extreme groups a reason to be. Yet as Davin (1983) claims, to be a mother of the race is somewhat ambiguous. For some the whiteness of white mothers represents an unreliable and degraded marker, for others it is a decentred boundary marker. In Davin's research Imperialism is easy prey to racist ideology if belonging is assumed to reflect a fairly homogenous national ethnicity (Davin 1983:16). The state exerts control in the way that it validates certain behaviour to re-assure the collective of its existence.

In doing so, it reasserts moral authority over women who are seen to be deviant. Returning to feminist writings, marginality is equally a powerful position of perspective and resistance and can emerge as a place of power (Hill Collins 1986, Huckman 2005, Reynolds 2006). Women's capacity to change, albeit temporarily, reveals a fluidity to identities, that subverts and contests historically constructed ideas of natural and essential difference.

In deconstructing race the normative status of whiteness has increasingly been questioned, leading to a growth of interest in the socially constructed nature of white identities and processes that support that (Bonnett 1996, Dyer 1997). The approach privileges racially subjugated forms of knowledge as having a particular perspective, but one that calls for a deeper understanding of those that speak from that place. Critical Race Theory draws from a broad literature base including law, sociology, history, philosophy and race relations, and integrating aspects of social constructionism (Crenshaw 1995, Delgado 2000). A major component of this approach is to rearticulate white identities in ways that are not reliant on the subordination of other. To critically engage with race, as a concept, is tempered by the reality of racial discrimination (Bailey 2000). I use these texts to argue that white mothering occurs at the intersection of a powerful sexualised and racialised discourse with its roots in the construction and reproduction of difference, but also in ways that reveals an insecurity to whiteness.

As a relatively new research arena Critical White Studies remains an untested and shielded border (Frankenberg 2004, Macintosh 1998). To quote Frankenberg (2004), this type of analysis would be to conceive of whiteness as 'unfrozen'. This type of deconstruction has been slow to develop but began to emerge as a credible academic discipline from the late 1980s. It is believed to have developed from a Black centred critique of whiteness as strategic rhetoric and the fallout from a lived experience of legal frameworks and racism. More generally, academics claimed the construction of racial categories represents the crafting of white identities using historical and cultural criteria to flatten and invoke a number of racialised hierarchies (Bonnett 2000, Hall 2005). The nature of white identities and white privilege relates to the advantages associated with white bodies social and spatial practices secured through the process of 'othering' (Knowles 2005:90, hooks 1992, Frankenberg 2004). What appears to be natural is actually a social project that is manufactured and reinforced on an international platform. By casting a critical eye on the reinvention of whiteness, I claim that what happens to whiteness in interracial relationships is acute and hugely significant.

In terms of white mothering, whiteness disturbs the socially salient views of race. Warnke (2007:23) discussed how the accepted rules of identity are key dimensions deployed in the signification of group boundaries and the distinction of the 'other'. You must either demonstrate that you 'have it' or that you are 'not it'. Despite different approaches there are consensual views on what the key signifiers are. I began by considering the role of cultural heritage in the redrawing of boundaries and the positioning of white mothers and their children inside and outside those lines. Given the value attached to cultural acquisition, I considered social process of cultural transmission from one generation to another. I pointed out that culture has become a battleground used to bar white mothers from effective membership within any community, or is cited as a factor in the miss-selling of identity options to mixed race young people.

I then looked at ethnic identities to sharpen our attention to the disjuncture between aspirational and validated identities. As Nazroo (2010) argues, local identities might appear accessible to all. In the many accounts of migrant families there are stories of transformation. To be sure, at the margins people do find the resources to reconfigure their experience, to mount a counter narrative, or make sense of where they are. But aspirational identities emerge within a framework of constraints limited by social structure and social position. White mothers aspire for their children to be secure in their belongings and attachments. I have argued that the whiteness of white mothering plays a role in sustaining that challenge. Marginality thus becomes a site of resistance and a place of power. Moreover, this new English culture is already infused with connections to other cultures, in this case the interconnectedness of aspects of Englishness with Britishness and the Caribbean and countries from the African continent. The ethnic boundaries surrounding Englishness, constructed by white mothers, are consistent with post Colonial expansionist criteria.

Conclusion

If we consider that people move to boundaries to make things happen, this provides a new way of thinking about the structure and function of that space. Boundaries are more than geographical domains and physical territories. Likewise, borderlines are more than symbolic where they generate material affect. In terms of use value I have indicated that borders can be used as gateways, holding bays or hiding places to achieve certain ends. Gateways enable manoeuvrability across the complex and shifting landscapes of modern life. Fluid identities take advantage of enhanced mobility to maximize opportunities. How long people stay in borderlands and what happens to them

will depend to some degree on individual biographies. Holding bays would work as spaces where considerable negotiation occurs so as to minimize any threat to the collective that is considered to be harmful. This is a position Yuval Davis discussed in terms of settlement camps located some distance from European Union frontiers (Yuval Davis 2005:518). This leads her to conclude that boundaries are spaces where struggles and re-negotiation occur, making boundaries the space where all the action takes place (Yuval Davis 2005:521). Hiding places, such as being 'in the closet', are interior spaces where you retain a presence without necessarily being exposed or pushed to the margins. How secure a position can be achieved in this type of interior space is linked to a host of contingencies including the risk of exposure and the availability of alternate networks. I suggest this means that some identities are more easily anonymised than others or more valued. People would appear to place themselves at boundaries when they want change and transformation. This makes boundaries identifiable but not the boundary affect. I follow up on what Yuval Davis (2005) suggests is that we hang onto the idea that identities are politically and discursively constructed we can explore the process through which they come into being. I believe the narratives demonstrate these concerns as contributors challenge how we talk about difference and the battle to fix borders becomes evident. The way in which difference becomes more diffuse through acts of articulation and expression

To understand what mothering means, needs to investigate the practices that bring that identity into view. I argue that this is achieved through the thesis. In the archival chapter I reflect on the historical significance of white mothering to ethnic and class based constructions of the nation. I demonstrate a number of processes that underscored the construction of national boundaries as discursive patterns. As a result I am able to draw attention to structures of power through the interrelations of ethnicity, gender, class and sexuality, with the nation. The literature review has provided a strong overview of the varied nature and characteristics of boundaries and that boundary work is subject to the theoretical models applied. I have paid particularly close attention to gendered constructions of the nation illuminating how women operate as active in the construction and determination of boundary locations. Throughout the thesis I argue that women's personal stories provide insight into boundary maintenance and negotiation and demonstrate the particularity of their relationship to the nation through the journeys they have taken. What is affirmed is the need to explore particular social, cultural and historical locations as constituting a value base (Goldthorpe 1991, Hall 2005). Providing a historical context through analysis of archival material attends to this issue in some way.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research Design

In this chapter, I introduce an interpretive framework that supports the analysis of thirty individual women's stories. My research intended to explore personal account narratives told by women in boundary positions. Therefore, I needed to verify women's relationship to boundaries rather than assume positionality. Understanding this was central to unlocking a new dimension for research in this field. Fleshing out national boundaries and the borderlines it constructs was crucial to establish whom, and on what terms, belongings are negotiated. To achieve this, I needed to establish collectivity as more than Anderson's (1983) notion of an imagined collective. The nation needed a substantive base and the research tools I selected had to establish what constitutes a nation. I reason that in performing as a state institution, embedded within archival material are traces of political systems and processes that sustain the nation over time and in the face of change. The source materials they contain arrange 'evidence' as if it were the natural outcome of history, through the raced, gendered and class based relations they present and re-present. I argue, that through this process of institutionalisation, archives confer validity on particular forms of knowledge that are then taken as a given (Macdonald 2006).

As importantly, my methods needed to expose the types of interaction that occurred at the borders. A primary research objective was to consider a change in the group dynamics on account of mixedness. This meant understanding what happened to whiteness once it became visible but remained read in ways that were relatively invisible and anonymised. Narrative analysis took account of the historical and social context within which the nation was embedded and importantly, linked white mothering to a legacy of governance and regulatory frameworks (Josselson 2006). I expose these actions in chapter 4. In addition, the approach had to be sufficiently robust, yet, flexible enough to respond to shifting and contextual identity formations (Silverman 2004). It was important to be able to capture nuanced changes and point to co-constructions of belonging. This raised practical difficulties where gender, class, ethnicity and citizenship required an approach that could manage complex interlocking dimensions. According to McCall (2005:2) intersectionality offers a category of analysis, but is one that requires the provisional definition and use of unstable categories. This helped to make sense of my contributors' use of established categories to claim or resist a particular identity status.

Theoretical Framework

To cover such a broad set of issues the underpinning philosophical approach I adopted was Social Constructivism. This established a legitimacy to explore negotiated belongings and to consider the nation as a constructed category. I also draw on Symbolic Interactionism, an approach that lends meaning to the study by framing interaction, language and context, as the basis for meaning. This was important where I was looking at the currency of particular meanings over time. Likewise, I used the literature review to trace how the concept of difference had been treated across varied intellectual contexts (Mason 2002: 2006). The point of this exercise was to emphasise an evolving story rather than deliver a particular approach. In fact, difference, was central to a wide range of frameworks, with each able to demonstrate new and important learning's. Being an exploratory study, of a little researched field, it was difficult to establish a singular approach.

To carve a pathway through, I was drawn to feminisms, producing an overarching framework for research activity by melding epistemological with practice based thinking (Haggis 1990, Harding 1987, Friedman 2001, Ramazonoglu 2002). Although the feminist movement is diverse and does not speak with one voice, I would argue that there are key principles within the various strands of feminism that seek to challenge patriarchal power and structures. Equally, there are tensions in reconciling a feminist epistemology with scientific research and these are made explicit throughout this chapter. To overcome some of those tensions, I draw on Friedman's (2001) claims for feminisms, as a movement that recognises diversity whilst underplaying hegemonic knowledge. I also embraced Lazreg's (2004) conception of feminism as intellectual resistance. This offered a framework from which I could unsettle dominant understandings and be creative in generating new ideas.

Key writers of direct relevance included: Anthias & Yuval Davis (1989,1992) whose body of work highlighted women's role as both symbol and actor in boundary construction. In recasting motherhood as a strategic arm of nation building, Davin (1983) acknowledged women's role in the transference of cultural practices between generations. Stoler's research (2001, 2006) identified regulatory frameworks that surround the sexual practices of women. Each makes explicit the links between gender, motherhood and sexuality with the nation as a political organization. This second conceptualisation of nation as a political entity, spoke of a significant power and impact over individual lives.

In the work of Cultural Theorists I found a rich source of analytical models, ranging from a Structuralists focus on textual representation and systems of signification, to Post Structuralism's concern with multivocal and multilayered meanings (Tilley 1991). Palimpsest, is a term considered by Mason (2006) to indicate how archives hold fragments of what went before. By exposing those layers it is possible to reveal patterning in the ideas that have been consolidated over time or discarded. I see the palimpsest as a useful indicator of continuity and change. When linked to the notion of material culture, sources conform to particular sets of rules and are organised, produced and understood, in ways that condition readers to consume the text in a particular way (Hodder 1994). I believe these cultural dimensions are aspects of research that ensure connectedness between the historical and contemporary materials I used.

In writing about the value of qualitative research Ritchie and Lewis (2003) position meaning as situated activity, a perspective I was familiar with. In terms of imagining new approaches and understandings, I draw from Cultural Theorists such as Kuhn (1995) and Hall (2005), which stimulated new ways of thinking about subject positions. In researching family photographs Kuhn (1995) elucidates how understanding the context for production is important. She describes the structured positioning of children in happily family photographs is not a spontaneous act but a structured presentation by a third party to create a particular version of home life that excluded her mother. This insight broadens my thinking beyond the fine detail of each particular document. These were less obvious analytical strategies concerned with provenance and authority. They enable discussions about how those in authority thought about and represented white mothers to a wider audience. I believe Cultural Theory helped to provide coherence when using materials across different time frames.

In ***Report on Investigation into conditions of the Coloured Population in a Stepney Area***, I looked at this more closely by focusing on the foreword, acknowledgments and publication data. An incredibly high number of interested parties were identified in the preface spanning named local residents as well as Downing Street. This appears a rather high proportion of interested parties for what amounts to an area of less than 1 square mile of East London. Equally, the report was produced in 1944 during World War II, which contextualises the report within wider concerns of national security. Although I was unable to deduce how the report was received, juxtaposing that report with Schutz's (1944) thesis of the same year cements the view that internal strangers are enemies within. This might suggest a pervasive current of thought about the need to

shore up national boundaries. A full analysis of this document is offered in Chapter 4.

In terms of nation building, as Williams (1958) reasons we join this process at a particular moment in time. This was helpful in terms of understanding the nation as a specific location, that regardless of choice white mothers were born into. Using their authority nations position and establish what is commonplace and use provenance to assert a set of rules. Feminist, post-structural and cultural theory reflected shared concerns with challenging the constructedness of those rules and norms by acknowledging sites of power and deconstructing norms. By critiquing the archive as a repository to validate historical research, they focus on the institutional mechanisms that produced those meanings (Velody 1998, Steedman 2001). By understanding the archive as a process of institutionalisation, I reason archives can be considered active in border construction and management.

Undertaking Qualitative Research

I continue feminist practice in exposing gendered relations of power by centralizing women's voice (Ramazanoglu 2002). As described by McCall (2005), the purpose of research is not to deconstruct fixed categories as social fictions, but to actively use them to demonstrate relationships between different social groups. The thesis considered the possibility that these relationships, hence border activity, changed following childbirth, but not by women adopting an outward looking gaze. My proposition is not that white women move beyond national borders, this is too simplistic an assumption. I reason that white mothering leads to a reconfiguration of border architecture, the borderlines and boundary zones surrounding the nation, in fairly unpredictable ways. I took the ontological position that meaning is constructed and negotiated through a common, shared social reality. To a large degree the women I spoke with did not believe those commonly held views had changed. Under close scrutiny this gave way to multiple context specific realities (Snape & Spencer 2003).

Finally, I draw on Lincoln and Denzin (1992:2) to frame qualitative research as exploring what lies behind meaning. This was of central significance for a new research arena. Using this approach, I was able to expose the methods, by which the representations of white mothering appear, to scrutiny and analysis. In this chapter, I describe and illustrate two different methods of primary data collection. I explore the belongings that archives confer on those with a legitimate and credible status and dislocation as a process to exclude those who appear to make disingenuous claims to belong (Featherstone 2000). Provenance and

authenticity are central principles in the selection and presentation of 'historical materials' and I argue these concepts are of direct relevance to sanction secure belongings. In terms of theory generation, themes that emerge in both archival and narrative analysis, construct a sensitive and informed analysis of how difference impacts on the significant and ordinary experiences of women's lives (Ritchie 2003, Silverman 2004). This was one way of generating coherency between textual and oral accounts across different time periods.

A feminist reflective practice model

Reflexivity highlights the need for researchers to be aware of power relationships and political dimensions in professional practice. This section proposes a broader definition of reflexive practice, one that is embedded across the research process rather than in individualized conceptions of competence. I consider reflexive practice as both immediately rectifiable activities and posthumous scrutiny of what happened. Writing is itself a highly reflexive practice in which authorial voice shifts from academic authors to first person accounts. When writers assume responsibility for what is being said, objectivity is marked out as a useful mechanism to conflate distance (Morley 1996). Consistent with qualitative studies, this form of transparency can help identify the researcher's prior relationship to the subject and the researched. Moreover, by treating narrative as text, wider elements of that construction can be addressed (Freeman 2006). This can usefully include consideration of the interviewers role in how the narrative flows. However, as Letherby (2003) argues, caution should be exercised when understandings are located in subjugated forms of knowledge, for fear of intellectual discreditation. I already sense that I want to replace 'I' with more accredited forms of writing. This feeling crystallises deeper concerns I have where feminist methodologies appear under pressure from dominant conceptualisations of science. So, I also situate the thesis as a journey away from and back to, feminist approaches. I consider two core dimensions that have developed through feminist approaches: ethical practice and positionality.

Reflexive Practice as Ethics

I was drawn to feminist theory whose writings have been influential in the development of ethical practice (Friedman 1998, Letharby 2003). In particular, Doucet and Mauthner (2006:124) explore ethical dimensions of epistemologies as a means to connect ways of knowing, to knowing well. *Ethics in Qualitative Research* (2002) addresses wider issues of equality, empowerment and an analysis of the relationship between the researched and the researcher. Commensurate with this approach, a broad number of issues were considered, including sampling, access and the role of gatekeepers (Miller & Bell 2002). In

thinking ethically about doing good research and getting good data, Duncomb and Jessop (2000) discuss rapport as faked friendships. I interpreted this within a broader discussion of the struggles researchers face in managing the different demands of research on and with participants. Methodologically, unmasking the boundaries between what is naturally occurring or contrived is complex, when research involves people in a data collection activity. Whether individuals are framed as respondents, participants or contributors, it suggests something about how that story is constructed. There is always a degree of bias that locates the researched as an instrument for data collection and of analysis as the researcher's gain (Wengraf 2001).

It is taken as given that issues of confidentiality, informed consent, and anonymity have shaped the research and remain important tenets of ethical practice. Anonymity was negotiated in line with BSA (2001) Statement of Ethical Practice, and in pre interview discussions with participants about informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Liangputtong's (2007) *'Researching the Vulnerable'*, appears to represent an increasingly sophisticated body of ethical work. There is an acknowledged movement away from procedural implications, to more detailed concerns with the sensitive nature of enquiry. Developing the work of Raymond Lees' (1993) moves to a discussion about vulnerable groups as well as sensitive topics. Wellings's definition of sensitive research is,

'If it requires disclosure of behaviours or attitudes that would normally be kept private and personal, which might result in offence or lead to social censure or disapproval, and/or which might cause the respondent discomfort to express' (Wellings 2000, quoted in Liangputtong's 2007:5).

What I was asking women to do was discuss what lay in a private sphere of thought and perhaps had not been talked about in such forthright terms. In putting 'race' on the agenda, I was asking women to find the 'right words' to name and make sense of their feelings. Yet, I previously acknowledged that language frames the narrator in a particular way. How did women tread their own course? A fine line between accommodating even colluding with commonly held beliefs, or baulking at the implications of using racialised terms, was trodden. Neither of which tells us what individual women believe, merely points to the language they have at their disposal. The interviews raised challenging questions about sexual relations with Black men. How did women find the necessary language skills to distinguish what they thought and believed, from collective understandings? How did they impart meaning to me, without fear of recrimination, of being offensive or being judged?

What Liamputtong (2007) indicates is that the methods selected to exemplify good qualitative research can be put to effective use to hear those voices (Liamputtong 2007:7). There are opportunities to pay close attention to terminology and language use that quantitative methods may not bring to life. I consider the relationship that qualitative researchers develop with narrators is a way to access deeper expressions of meaning. I acknowledged a number of sensitivities surrounding the subject matter that may impact on what was knowable. It was clear that for some contributors the act of interracial sex remains a social taboo. Despite that I have also crossed that line there was a difficult battle between telling and keeping secrets. Some potential contributors had endured difficult relationships with extended family members and did not want to 'drag it all up again'; suggesting they had reached a point at which a working resolution had been reached. A number of women declined involvement, claiming they had little of value to contribute to the research and that interracial relationships were no different from any other. For others, interracial sex remained a strong source of stigmatisation.

I could empathise but was also concerned that these stories would contribute to a discourse of tense and difficult relationships. Whilst not wanting to avoid these issues, I wanted to get behind the reasons. Elderly women, who had families in the 1940s, would talk to me but were reluctant to actively participate. These women had grown up children and could offer an important vantage point. This was not non-participation, nor a matter of my encouraging participation through developing better rapport or building trust (Birch & Miller, 2002, Duncombe & Jessop 2002). I actually felt more than able to achieve this. I had my own stories of racism in the US and had lived with a Black man for over 25 years. Yet, these were bigger barriers that I am yet to resolve. I spoke at length to one white woman who claimed she was the first on her street to marry a Black man. She did have a story to tell and she wanted me to hear her memories, her lively and rich discussions about a period of social change. She talked about a Black family moving into the street, how her family and neighbours responded when they realised she was seeing a '*Black fella*' about the fuss and gossip that occurred on the street corners and the local school, about the emptiness of moving away to a New Town and about unresolved family tensions. Sadly, she was still unable to tell it in a way that was meaningful in research terms. She did not want it more widely shared.

I listened, yet was never fully informed about what she was actually saying, or why, or in what way having our conversation challenged or reconciled her

sentiments. Much like the archives, the interaction was primarily a one sided dialogue. She felt she was talking in depth, but I was only getting partial superficial shards of stories. In trying to prompt her she would opt out, become uncomfortable or increasingly vague. How should I interpret this level of participation? The information she shared was valuable and freely given. Ethically can this be used in my findings? She did consent to be interviewed, but not to be identified or included. In line with good practice I accepted this, but have I already compromised that position? Authors such as Miller & Bell (2002) write how informed consent embraces a number of dimensions, not all of which informants consciously choose. My ethical concern was factors that influence the process of disclosure and how does the right to privacy impact on that process?

Contributors, who initially consented to be interviewed and/or recorded, later regretted it. For some of the contributors telling had been a painful process and I reason that race was at the heart of this dilemma. Any negative comments left women feeling guilty, despite that in most cases racialised comments were immediately countered or deconstructed. Likewise, women did not want to dwell on mixedness, they were conscious of a powerful discourse that perpetuated the view that white mothers are reluctant to acknowledge the blackness of their children. In two examples, participants became visibly defensive once the interview proper started. Voice tone shifted and there was a reluctance to give out any information that might make those involved identifiable. These contributors monitored what they said to such a degree that I only ever felt privy to a partial closing or evaluative comment, part of a longer narrative which I was generally excluded from.

In one example, it was only after the narrator acknowledged '*Robben Island of course*' in a somewhat dismissive stance, that I could begin to make sense of any of the previous conversation. I felt inadequate as if I should have known what she was referring to. Equally despite my probing she would not then revisit this memory. If I tried to explore meanings or remained silent whilst thoughts were gathered I was likened to a therapist, mining for detail. I termed these reluctant narratives, where interviewees want to speak but work hard to guard individual privacy. I refer to the battle to retain control during interviews designed in an open and reflexive way (Norrick 2005). It was possible that not all white mothers had considered their relationship to the subject matter before agreeing to be interviewed.

I conceptualised these stories as spaces of intimate privacy that are claimed through various acts of concealment, distortion or omission. The disclosure of information was so fragmented, it makes little sense to a researcher coding across narratives. The conceptualisation of secrecy alludes to significant ethical challenges in terms of securing what is unspoken and interpreting what is disclosed or concealed. If individuals are guarding against a potential loss of control are these insights more contextually significant in terms of my findings? Despite emotional safeguards, my concern was striking a difficult balance between respecting privacy and encouraging disclosure. I was conscious of the personal struggle and emotional work involved in withholding experiences, which made me, as the researcher feel very uncomfortable. I was asking for memories over a life course, about the choices women had made and about their allegiances and affiliations. From a methodological perspective, Riessman (2008:24) points to the necessity for detail when trying to understand the complexity of experience. I wanted an account of the importance of intimate relationships and the meanings white mothers attached to them.

As an experienced interviewer, I adopted a number of feminist strategies to try to better manage the interview, including power in the interview setting and effective communication (Mauthner, Birch, Jessop & Miller 2002). However, I believe a Right to Privacy poses real implications for the interview setting that requires further consideration beyond the scope of this thesis. Upon reflection, I believe different styles of interview emerged. For older women, this took the form of oral history interviews (Friendlander 1998). These women discussed in great detail particular areas of their lives. For example, in discussing the clothing her husband wore on their first meeting, Brenda also described in detail the laundry press machine that she operated. Brenda offered six hours of narrative that spoke about individual experience, but as important were detailed descriptions of a Britain that was changing. Her discussions brought to life the transition of London's white working class neighbourhoods to areas peppered with small numbers of Caribbean migrants. Brenda's narrative coincides with the production of the Arnold Survey (1955) meaning there was a potential for Brenda to be included as one of the anonymous women in that document. I argue this is how the notion of different time periods is managed. There are no ruptures in the data but a strong sense of continuity.

With the very young girls there was not the same degree of detail. Many questions were answered with a simple '*I don't know*'. Born in the late 1990s, these accounts bring us to contemporary Britain. Whilst the concept of racial difference perhaps is less strange for Taz, where multicultural landscapes are

more commonplace, expressing difference remains tricky where difference appears less categorical. In one particular case, the contributor clearly wanted to be interviewed using a standardised questionnaire approach. I wondered if contributors considered this a more effective way of managing boundaries and filtering disclosure, potentially reflecting back some of the known limitations of this approach (Gilbert 2005). To what extent should researchers outline the process as well as the subject matter in advance of the interview? I believe this could be problematic for qualitative methodologies whose power lies in adaptive capacity.

Reflexive Practice – Positionality

Feminist reflexive practice makes increased demands against researchers to account for their social location and the role they play in the co-construction of data (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). This thesis represents narrative accounts by thirty very different women, whose lifestyle choices point to a number of differently intersecting relations of difference. Beyond sexual intimacy, with a black man, contributors were far from a homogenous sub group of the population (see appendix B). In chapter 2, the Literature Review, I discussed the role of language and meaning making as a way to connect individuals to social acts (Back 1996). In many cases women identified that I was a white mother through the language we used. Commonly this was a more racially differentiated language repertoire and varied use of descriptive labels. Language seemed to indicate in some way a shared connection. Our shared experience of having a Black partner may mean the statement, '*typical black man*', assumes a mutual understanding. The danger was to subsume our different opinions and experiences within a single account. Once under scrutiny that connection was highly variable. A number of contributors were concerned to draw out my attitudes and opinions on mixedness to consider if it were in tune with their own. Contradictory understandings were problematical once when began the work of pinning down meanings. This was commonly driven by our need to use an established language framework, but it was absolutely essential to demonstrate fluidity and avoid categories that were constructed for political purposes.

McCall (2005:10) usefully proposes that the artificiality of social categories can be illuminated in history, leading to challenges to their singularity. As a category with a fragile backdrop, I believe archival research provided a point of departure and critique of broad brushed generalisations of white mothering. From experience, I also believe that living with a Black partner and/or a mixed race child produces different understandings and experiences, dependent on who the discussions are with, or the purpose of those discussions. During the course of

an interview a Black partner may be positioned through racial, national or ethnic or cultural codes, allowing a developed language repertoire to be deployed and understood. This was also accompanied by discussions of gendered behaviours, class and visible difference such as skin tone, including a fair skinned, light skinned, clear complexion. In acknowledging that a child's belongings changed, dependent upon the context they were operating within, white mothering reflected a more sophisticated understanding of the multi-layered identities that can be navigated rather than assumed.

The race and gender affect of the interviewer has occupied a significant tranche of social research where it suggests that cross race/gender dialogue problematises opinions and meanings (Wyatt 2004, Best 2003). On the surface the researcher/researched dynamic for this project constituted two white women. Ordinarily this would not attract attention. Yet, in this case the subject matter calls for more detailed consideration, this was whiteness discussing blackness and otherness. The impact of that dynamic deserves a more detailed review than I have been able to present in thesis. Racial categories, the affect of social stereotyping and the deconstruction of visible difference were important conversations that opened up spaces to claim or resist particular modes of identification. One the whole, contributors understood the interview was imbued with race in ways that we could not escape from. It was the reason for the interview, a shared factor in our lives and the way in which we connected. As discussed, those commonalities were both acknowledged - having a black partner - and not acknowledged - our whiteness. I believe the circumstances of the interview provided an opportunity to work through some of those connections without fear of judgment. Had I been a Black researcher those discussions may have taken a very different form.

As argued by Knowles (2004:53), difference connects to the racial order of things. White mothers' talk enabled the disjuncture between the uses of language as a signifier, alongside the feelings associated with language meanings, to come to the surface. Perhaps having a Black partner and mixed children had taught me not to make assumptions about shared values. So I was surprised to identify my own biases operating. A diary entry,

'A question that had to be asked was to what extent I as a white researcher had normalised Englishness and whiteness de-ethnicising my own identity. Was this true? There is a presumption that within the notion of English, ethnic consciousness does not occur - my strong sense of past, tradition, and culture is rooted in my English upbringing. Brass bands, Sunday Lunch, structure,

organisation, principles of honesty and respect I felt to be rooted in my English heritage. The practical issues that this led to was brought into contrast when my supervisory team talked of their strong sense of ethnic and not racial difference' (19th April 2006).

I seemed to explain my whiteness through Englishness. Methodologically, a conflation of whiteness and Englishness as the 'invisible norm' had to be worked through if the study could understand white mothers' changing relationship to the nation post childbirth (Chan 2006). Byrne (2006) adds to my complexity by asserting whiteness is synonymous with middle classness. If I am white and middle class how does that impact on the research or my Englishness? Having spent the greatest proportion of my life living with black family members, and residing in the US and Europe, I am often described as not very English. Yet, I am always described as white and always female. Potentially, I believe that my sense of Englishness was less likely to be shared with contributors than my whiteness. Furthermore, contributors who agreed to participate in my research reveal British roots. Welsh, Irish and Scottish ancestry created a British not English perspective despite that I asked for English participants.

Reflexive practice asks how my experiences became entangled in the lives of others (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). With so many possible connections I turned to Ali (2003:481) who discussed how she identified and dis-identified with participants in terms of class, gender and race, and saw this as a process to ensure the constant acknowledgement of enmeshed power relations. I reason intersectionality complicates the question of positionality and power, where the impact of a particular social location is difficult to acknowledge. Class, gender, age, age of children, ethnicity of partner, are a small number of the dimensions aligned with contributors beyond blackness or Englishness. Understanding my positionality, as a white mother, was entirely the point that what was under question. In Wyatt (2004) tangible codes can be grasped in the moment just prior to being eclipsed by the unconscious, or, what she sees as a point of closure determining what is knowable. In the interview, I refocused attention on a spectrum of racisms that allowed us, in that moment to focus on the fragmentation of whiteness. I believe that white mothering can stretch those boundaries by extending thinking beyond familiar spaces. Together we shared an ability to move into ambiguous zones, but make return journeys and homecomings. This had a neutralising impact on the research dynamic.

The balance of power between researcher/researched was not always clear in other ways. I was a student interviewing academics as well as a researcher

talking to young single mums. I was married to a British born African, but was interviewing women whose partners were first generation migrants with distinctive African national or ethnic identities. I was white, English and middle class and interviewing white professional middle class women, but also white working class housewives. My concern was justifying white mothers credibility to discuss blackness. The experience of having a child may not be a stepping stone into greater cultural awareness. I was conscious of critiquing a research project that drew conclusions by asserting the ethnicity of the participants, as opposed to the questions asked. The project considered relationships between white teachers and minority ethnic students. I wondered what inference could be drawn, without asking the students directly, in what way, if at all, racial difference was important.

In interviews I risked leading respondents if I asked direct questions. For some women this was their first and only relationship. To ask '*what do you find attractive about Black men?*' may be considered offensive. It certainly was asking contributors to commit to the idea that the visible difference was an important factor in selecting a partner. It was more appropriate to see if, and how they discussed difference, but this risked lengthy discussions that warranted a different mode of analysis. Erica is on tape for 4 hours discussing a dysfunctional upbringing, alcoholic parents, living in temporary accommodation, and studying for a Psychology degree as a mature student alongside blues parties, drinking, dominoes, children and her relationship to Black men. These discussions chart different thinking at different times of her life and she would often reflect on what she had said and provide an alternate view. Like Erica, women in serial relationships with Black men did not find direct questions offensive and felt at ease discussing their relationships. In some sense this needed to be asked. As a study that in part examines white women's construction of Black men, the objectification of Black men identified the dominant codes used by the collective. I contributed to this objectification and co-construction of Blackness and maleness, as a white mother and researcher, at other times these categories were deconstructed or indistinguishable.

I argue that interviews did produce an understanding of the moments when difference connects individuals to a bigger picture and to social structure. Likewise, it gave women the opportunity to reflect on the degree by which particular modes of difference influence their lives. Some women interpret this as needing to shield children from the negative impacts of a socially segmented society, whereas others considered difference a canvas on which to write new opportunities. I was certainly in the latter camp and did not consider mixedness

a disadvantage to my children, although I was acutely conscious that racism persists to disadvantage mixed race children in particular ways (Tikly 2004, Harman 2010). One of the difficulties I grappled with was the management of material that could be interpreted in fairly negative ways (Lee 1993). My responsibility to my contributors was to avoid representations that support the view that interracial relationships have a purely sexual basis or that mixed race children are 'mixed up'. This form of screening is always a dilemma. On reflection, there is a gap in the data in terms of discussions that centred directly on mother/child relationships. This could be interpreted as a failing, or an act of resistance (Lee 1993). I considered the gap actually revealed that having a Black partner was a more important factor, as contributors had not been pushed to discuss either/or but reflect on what was important.

To some degree positionality has been criticised as overly focusing on what happens in the interview setting. In striving for a more transparent process the debate takes up a broader concept of accountability including accountability for the knowledge produced. So, good reflexive practice seems to demand attention to more insular research activities, including data analysis. In my case, this was a frustratingly slow and emotionally challenging process. I had spent a huge amount of time in analysing archival materials and was daunted by the sheer volume of materials produced through narrative. I was unable to treat the accounts as narratives due to time pressures. My belief is that an account of the emotional process is an important rationale for doing research. I turn to Steedman's (2008) notion of 'research intimacies' as a concept that demonstrates connectedness as a relationship between the researcher and the research material. Steedman (2008) talks of moments when it all just seems to make sense. This did not happen in all my interviews, some were tense with no connection. This had never happened to me before. The connection I formed with the research emerged during analysis. Returning to Veronica's extract, I was struck by the comment 'our rules'. This pointed to the irreducible ties of kin and sent a muddled message about Veronica's positionality. In that moment she was firmly located within the collective and deferred authority to her white brothers. This was a fundamental turning point. White mothers were not marginal but anchored within the collective.

It struck me that the difficulties I found in writing 'my methodology', were in perceiving it to be accomplished in advance of doing it. Mason (2000:24) argued this point where she writes, design is data driven and context sensitive, amounting to a rejection of *a priori* strategic decision making in qualitative research. Some scholars agree a degree of pre-structuring is necessary in

inductive research to avoid wasting time Maxwell (1996:64). As subtle and nuanced understandings began to emerge they sharpened the possibilities for research. Equally, in moments of temporary insight, the core idea became fragmented and difficult to discuss. In resisting a particular theoretical framework, the early stages of the research yielded very abstract material. The methodology evolved as the research developed and unfolded through the dynamics of interaction and discussion, particularly supervision.

Supervisor/Student Relationships

During the course of the thesis the supervisory team changed. It is an interesting observation that an account of the student - supervisor relationship does not feature as a formal component of the methodology. Yet, I would argue it asserts and influences the thesis in many ways. The shift to link white women's experience to the nation was crucial in this regard and acted as a catalyst for re-orientating the research away from a parenting focus. It encouraged me to locate women's experiences in relation to wider structures of power. Likewise, the focus on identity enabled the research to move into new realms. Whilst an account of rapport, expertise, power and collaboration are discussed in terms of the researcher/researched relationship, these factors also drive the supervisor – student dynamic, representing a space of authority and ownership, which, deserves attention.

Research Methods

In the following section I provide a more detailed overview of the different research methods I used and the methodological implications of selecting two different time periods for the study. I believe, where methods run concurrently they allow the reader to visualise changes over time and to trace the genealogy of particular concepts that were significant in the narratives.

Archival Research

I began with a lengthy search for documentary evidence of an official engagement with interracial intimacy. I considered the representation of white mothering to draw out the production of difference. Identifying this process enabled those elements that constitute the 'nation' and the boundaries it constructs to come into view. Robinson (2004:450) reasons that source produces 'truth', the evidence about what an identity can be, rather than verify an identity already in existence. In using archival research, this identity was a partial, arguably, a distorted and restricted view of anonymous individual's transgressive behaviours. Most importantly, these source documents provide a way of focusing on the collective treatment of white mothers by public bodies and

national institutions. Using those materials, I sketched out who, and what counts as belonging. I also demonstrate the social significance of boundary infringements. In those moments, I claim the collective is rearticulated through the language and social practices the nation gave rise to.

I borrowed from historical approaches to negotiate entry points into a vast data source. Historians approach the analysis of textual materials in a systematic way to preserve the context of the material they encounter. I settled on seven sources selected from a larger sample that illustrate an official engagement with white mothers who 'cross the colour line'. They represent the voices of influential actors, key policy makers and government officials, as they respond to a growing social phenomenon. An 'official response' is interpreted as an expression of national identity as the cultural texts they produced revealed a patterned response to those who undermine and challenge group cohesion. Cultural theorists influenced my analytical framework by suggesting new ways of reading archival material. The production, consumption and circulation of ideas, were important in the work of Tilley (1991) Hodder (1994) and Kuhn (1995). These were particularly influential in tracing the connections between individual reports and broader collective representations.

Linking Archives to the Nation

A significant challenge for the study was to justify how archival sources could say anything about the nation, particularly as my sources came from a number of different collections. I begin to make those links by drawing on a vast bank of cultural theorists for whom the archive represents a process of institutionalisation and is active in the sculpting of the nation (Ames 1992, Tilley 1991). In Burton (quoted in Robertson 2004:468) the idea of archival collaboration within state apparatuses acts as a clear process to secure national identity. What Osborne (1999) considers is that archives act as a focal point for the convergence of representations with a body of evidence. I argue the nation is reflected in the materials it has chosen to preserve and those materials are then given provenance for their position within the archive. Using this position of authority, the archive produces an edifice that transcends time. To support this claim, I refer to the dominant idea that an archive is a repository for the storage and collection of national material (Featherstone 2000).

Velody makes a strong statement in opening his paper with the line '*as the backdrop to all scholarly research stands the archive*' (Velody 1998:1). One way to interpret this was to consider that beyond the symbolism of the archive, was a physical structure that offers a legitimate source for meaning making through

consensus building. Archives are described by Hooper Greenhill (2001) as a physical and ideological space to consolidate knowledge, establish and reconfirmed it as legitimate. Evocative, powerful and symbolic claims attach to archival collections, to give authoritative value to the source documents they contain. Featherstone (2000) argued this point in claims that archives operate as an elite source of knowledge. This is a self-sustaining mechanism for the classification and legitimation of particular types of knowledge. He goes further, linking archives with the emergence of the modern state, such that the archive is a key source of the nation '*it is the storehouse for the material from which national memories were constructed (Featherstone 2006:591)*'. Indeed, for Velody the importance of the archive is in informing 'us' of the origins and development of 'us' (Velody 1998:5).

Steedman (2001) writes that archival collections are places where remembering is generated through connections and lineage, or as sites that offer a potential space to put memory into. Here, the archive, and the history it generates, has a malleable and creative function that acts to memorialize a particular version of the nation. I argue it does so by stimulating particular connections to the past, through the material it makes available and the associations that can be made through classification. In tracing well trodden paths, contact nodes provide a sense of coherency and legitimation. I was able to use these to sketch out the characteristics and qualities that shape national identities. Equally, I interpret the use of the term 'backdrop' as an edifice, a screening mechanism that makes representations available for public disclosure. However, there are clear regulations including censorship and time managed protective clauses to restrict access. In summary, cultural theorists indicate how national memories are accumulated and powerful connections are demonstrated through the archive (Featherstone, Robertson 2004). What was important was how those memories were understood and the belongings they articulated.

Undertaking Archival Research

Archival research was undertaken in a fairly mechanistic way. I defined potential access points using keyword searches on the National Archives database, A2A, the Archives Hub and specialist databases held at a number of research centres. This required thinking historically about how the subject may have been talked about, classified and ultimately catalogued. 'Half caste' and 'Mixed Race', were some of the initial terms I used to access catalogues. Half-caste appeared in 5 'hits' and those documents were primarily concerned with Colonialism within East African territories. Under discussions was the status of illegitimate children born to Colonial men and indigenous 'native' women. Using the National Archives

database 38 references were found using the term 'Mixed Race', yet the relevancy of these reduced to 6 for the time frame I selected. This material frequently discussed differences between ethnic minority crewmen and ships with mixed ethnic crews (see FO 371/182107). There were also files containing requests for separate schools for mixed race children in Nyasaland which again centred on difficult discussions regarding paternity and nationality (see CO 525/155/11).

Miscegenation rarely appeared which I found interesting. Data on the presence of Black seamen in British ports and 'social problems' commonly associated with them tended to focus on criminality, vice and sexually transmitted diseases (Levine 2003). In these initial documents the focus was very much on Black men of South Asian heritage (see HO 213/308). Indeed early data suggests the largest numbers of 'mixed race children' were to be found in this group. Further investigation is required to understand why particular configurations of 'ethnic mixing' assumed a greater degree of interest. I would argue that archival records focus more closely on scrutinising relationships between white women and African or African Caribbean males. As a category, white women appeared relatively unimportant. It was extremely arduous work to find them Small fragments and shards of evidence, 1 line amongst a chapter, 1 word within an article reinvigorated my search, if momentarily white mothers came into view. However, the focus often re-directed me towards a discourse I was familiar with and I found myself absorbed in trope of Black men and coloured children in the social care system (Barns 1996, Prevatt Goldstein 1999). To some degree, the archive re- directed me towards existing discourse and locating data within that discourse then legitimates its place within it (Roberston 2004).

Davin (1983) discussed her personal difficulties in tracing material using keyword searches, at a seminar at the Institute of Historical Research I attended. She indicated her most useful source had been 'everyday activities'. This term ultimately opened the door for her detailed exploration of women's domestic life (Davin, Oral History Lecture notes May 2004). Looking back at my journal I see this very point:

'I felt hemmed in, that I needed to find my information in pre-existing systems that I had already exhausted in library settings. How was I to begin to find anything? I had to try and understand how others may have talked about my topic, to determine whether there were any boxes that I could look in. There I was again [due to the cataloguing system] faced with child welfare, adoption and fostering as my most likely sources. The

boxes were brought to me and I began to sift through the information ... 4 hours on and I have found nothing and am a little disillusioned. But a little part of me thinks there is something here – I just haven't looked in the right place' Diary entry May 2006.

I later record spending five days looking for material before finding a document entitled 'half coloured children'. In my excitement I tried to negotiate with the archivist to photocopy the document, so that I could study it with less time constraints but she was resistant. In reality, I subsequently establish that the document had been published in a social sciences journal. This was an important step in managing my expectations. Osborne (1999) talks about archives having an illusionary quality, when in practice they contain the mundane and ordinary. An incredible amount of time is involved in archival research, which was difficult to qualify or justify. I spent 2 years searching for clues, targeting potential sources and negotiating access to places that managed to withhold their secrets or were subsequently made public. I walked away with the understanding that not all questions can be answered.

There was considerable academic debate regarding history and sociology as distinctive disciplines calling for careful methods (Tuchman 1999). It is plausible, that I missed a number of insights and leads when searching for specific information within a loosely collected body of work. I refocused on more specialised language: Anglo Coloured or Colonial, Half Coloured, Coloured Children, Docklands, Prostitute, Coloured People, Colour Bar. These terms directed me to places where early interactions occurred. They also identified the social and moral welfare agencies that worked to support economic migrants. I questioned the quality and usefulness of the data I found. Individual Pieces provided insufficient context or covered too many topics, a wider geographical spread, or time frame. Conceptually this was difficult to reconcile, I was finding evidence, but of what? Identity Statements provided another route to locate material that was fruitless. The Runnymede Collection contains 6000 books and pamphlets, 200 journals, 40 boxes of press cuttings and 166 boxes of research files. There was no space for white women in this collection, yet I am sure they are present in a number of ways.

I chose to revert to manual search strategies and spent several weeks in the British Library Newspaper Archive scouring the national press but including localised stories in the East London Advertiser, East End News, and Stepney Chronicle. I hope to find potential leads to take back to the archive, or storylines that mentioned white women and gave them a concrete existence as girlfriends,

partners and mothers. Hartmann (quoted in Chessum 1998:36) writes newspapers inform public opinion by increasing public awareness of events and issues. White women were present in romanticised and eroticised accounts of interracial love (McClintock 1995). I found unruly and disorderly white women in stories of vice and immorality (The Times 26th June 1920). These stories spoke of a sordid world of abusive relationships between immoral white women and Black men. They ran screaming from burning homes and were subject to racial attack as curious sightseers watched on from the pavements.

I pondered how I might use some of this material. In *Imagining Home*, Webster (1998) used small snippets to contextualise life in Post War Britain as a Black female migrant. She connects these snippets to data from oral narratives and life writing and the wider literature review. This illustrates how different women respond to the roles and identities assigned to them (Webster 1998:xv). As a result, she is able to deconstruct the interstices between class, race, and gender in this period. She achieves this by comparing multiple meanings of home and the particular experiences of Black and white European migrants with those of British females. If I followed this approach, I could present the singularity of white mothers experience and point out further discrepancies in dominant constructions of the nation. However, I was unable to make coherent connections between small stories and the literature review, or contemporary women's accounts. I battled with a lack of representation.

I wanted to hear collective voices and unearth what was being said about white mothers so visited: The Feminist Library in Brixton, The Wellcome Institute, The Women's Library at London Metropolitan University, Women's Resources at Royal Holloway College, The Runnymede Trust Archive at Middlesex University, The Museum of London Archives, The National Archives. A number of potential sources such as the Black Cultural Archives were closed due to physical and financial restrictions such that the archives still existed but were inaccessible at the time of the research (Robertson 2004). Others operated restricted opening times or were physically remote, all problematical barriers that needed to be negotiated.

I tried to find new entry points and pathways into the collections. I was aware of a study of 'common prostitutes' undertaken by the British Social Biology Council (1955) in which white women with coloured partners had been identified as constituting approximately 20% of the sample. The data used was collected during the late 1940s and had strong connections to the Stepney area (Rolph 1955:2). I visited The Science and Society Collection at the Wellcome Institute to

look or similar material. Moreover, I wanted to examine the basis for claims made by professionals and academics that constructed all white women in relationships with Black men as 'prostitutes'.

'The frequency which the prostitutes choose to live with coloured men may possibly be due to their lack of respect for coloured men, a belief that these men are not equal to white men, and as a result they are able to enjoy a sexual relationship with them which they would be prevented from experiencing with men on whom they could not unconsciously look down, or with men who they feel might look down on them' (Rolph 1955:127).

Although the archivist was sure that white mothers would be identified, without any direct knowledge, it was impossible to determine where white women would have been included. This was a common occurrence and pointed to the restrictive associations that could be made. Without an access point, the extent of fieldwork required for this type of exploratory enquiry was overwhelming. I contacted archivists through direct letter and email including County Council archivists, members of historical societies and specialist librarians at a number of University collections. I visited a number of County Council archives where there was a history of immigration. I visited the archives of national institutions, particularly Port Authorities, where Seamen had been employed. I posted enquiries on the internal listings and specialist web sites.

Approaching the Archive

All of the archives I eventually visited required a rite of passage and the support of gatekeepers. This included a number of validity checks, including an outline discussion of what I needed to achieve in the archive, my affiliations to other institutional bodies, or written consent by known affiliates. There were security checks of my personal belongings before being stored away. There were restrictions on the type of equipment I could use, often only a pencil and paper. There was a registration process which set out the parameters for my using sources, how long I could use them for, how I might quote or reference them. I consented to a degree of censorship and monitoring by using these materials and I also committed to be under surveillance.

Periodically staff would patrol the premises, to ensure I was operating in line with particular criteria. This included how I held the documents and the length of time I had the material for. There were rules setting put limits to how many sources could be read at any given time, which room they ought to be read in and whether it was appropriate to photocopy details. I reason that this elevates the

status of archives and forces the researcher to interact with materials in a particular way (Ames 1992). I occupied a subject position that was reinforced through the structure, layout and organisation of the archive (Ames 1992). I quote at some length from a diary entry following my first 'unauthorised' visit to the special collections room at the Runnymede Trust Archive, as it appears to sum up a number of these issues.

'The archive was like a repository for books that formed a theme and that I would like to read. It was like a convenience store in that they all happened to be in one place and represented a shelf missing from the university library. Strangely I knew not to touch, that I might be destroying evidence. I needed permission...my initial excitement at the prospect of browsing the shelves soon abated. The naming of this space – as an archive – gave it a special status but also set up a power dynamic. There was a clear protocol about accessibility to the room and the material. My thought patterns were all to be controlled by someone who would try to interpret what I wanted and then determined what I could see through a fixed appointment. I was not to be free to wander'

Diary entry July 2004

I am not able to quantify the affect of these restrictions on the research. Yet, as the thesis represents an exploratory study, access to the archives, however restricted, provided new ways of engaging with the subject matter. It made visible the process, formal vocabulary, contexts, social commentary and conceptual fields, that surround white mothering.

Using Historical Methods as an Access Strategy

In this section, I discuss the value of historical methods as a means to negotiate pathways into the data. I also discuss a number of tensions in using historical methods as a non-historian. As informed by the work of Tuchman and Goldthorpe (1991) the treatment of historical documents is a specific academic discipline. Credible researchers are trained to interpret historical documents in a particular way. Velody (1998:3) reasons that accessing archival holdings places ritual under the scrutiny of intellectuals. Historians scrutinise what documents represent and how they should be handled. Likewise, Wallerstein (2000) points out that discussion and agreement is necessary to define and use vocabulary in a way that is consistent to the theory that is being specified. In both examples, my authority to use archival sources in an appropriate way is questioned. Was I acting as a historian in using archival sources and if not could I still use historical methods? My purpose in using archival material was not to provide facts about white mothers living in 1930s Britain. My concern was to gather evidence that

interracial relationships were discussed within official circles and to interrogate the terms in which those discussions occurred.

Methodologically this suggests archives are a risky data collection strategy for non historians. Archives represent a specific form of sociological enquiry and mode of response that is time consuming and difficult terrain, but importantly represented a place from which I was able to negotiate a starting point. I draw on Wallot's discussion of historical methodology as a system to establish reliability (Wallot 1998:365). I use this framework strategically to aid my selection and use of individual pieces.

1. Everyday Activities

Historical materials are those that are produced during the course of everyday activities and interaction. The material I selected captures ongoing discussion between official and formal institutions at various moments in time. The representatives of those institutions speak from a position of authority, drawing on their professional or occupational framework to discuss white mothering. Dr. Crosby's use of letter headed paper signifies the involvement of the Catholic Church. The information contained within these documents were not informal discussions between individuals, but an authorised voice representing a specific function. Where I enter, is in the midst of an ongoing dialogue between different agencies.

The Bamuta Report (PROCO876/247) is archived within the Records of Welfare and Students Departments at the National Archives. The police, Colonial office, local GP's, Magistrates, Health and Social care workers, Academic and National Institutions, numerous government officials and welfare departments, alongside local residents in the form of Committees, the media, and members of the Church have varying degrees of involvement in the reports production and dissemination. This demonstrates complex tiers of engagement and an inter agency dialogue at local and national levels.

2. Performativity

Wallot (1998) considers it important to pay attention to the production of documents. Selected materials must demonstrate a performative function, rather than generation for general information purposes. I began to discard materials that although interesting, were associated with anecdotal accounts and hearsay, or those that simply reported matters as factual accounts. The material I included appears to be working towards some form of solution. Indeed, all the documents I eventually selected variously propose anti miscegenation legislation,

the repatriation of Black partners, and the removal of children into care, surveillance, monitoring and the rehabilitation of white mothers. These materials demonstrate currents of opinions and value judgments, including official reaction to white mother's requests to accompany repatriated husbands to Africa or the Caribbean. Officials in the passport discriminated against British women who requested that they be allowed to accompany repatriated husbands back to their homelands.

The Colonial Office refused requests on the grounds of a threat to national security (PROC554105/6). As Tabili (2005) reveals personnel working within the passport office were anxious over the treatment of individuals. Concern centred around the fallout of state sanctioned infringements on the legal rights of all British citizens to travel. What Tabili (2005) illuminates are collisions and contradictions between general everyday activities and specific institutional practice. In a number of cases women were allowed to leave only to be declined entry on arrival. In terms of accountability, the act of enforcement was displaced onto Colonial governments. Named individuals tousled with British law, a public sentiment that was hostile to race mixing and officials acting as elected guardians of national interest. The dynamic suggests tensions between individual choice and collective boundaries, also suggesting an official engagement with interracial sex that was complex, shifting and subjective.

A Home Office memo (PRO1715483) points to this unresolved question and pre-empted the production of a formal paper, *The Position of White Wives of Natives of West Africa*, (1939). I choose not to select this material for detailed analysis. Without recourse to supplementary material I was unable to make adequate interpretations. In terms of quality control, I wanted Pieces to speak for themselves and standalone. I believed this would improve believability and the reliability of my findings. Arguably this document reveals tangled attachments and the overwhelming significance of a white English identity to the nation. Retrospectively I would argue that these incidents embody socially produced patterns in communicating belonging that was pervasive throughout the period. These were discussions that emerged in response to shifting contexts that necessitated an official position to be articulated.

3. Bearing Witness

Historical documents must bear witness to what was happening. This indicates historical materials are not per identified by chance or spontaneous acts, but emerge through a reactive planned activity. There must be some impetus to set in motion a sequence of events. Documents that included the collation of

primary evidence became crucial to my selection criteria. Each report I finally selected included formal, informal and covert research. A variety of organisations, including academic organisations and the police, were commissioned to research the facts about what was going on. Yet, the results made decision making difficult to exercise when the findings were ambiguous or failed to validate currents of opinion.

4. Finalised Pieces

The Pieces also represent a fixed form, in that the content is dated and to some degree finalised. No additional material can be added to the Pieces. The archival material I collected did exist in another time; it was circulated and produced for a particular reason at a particular moment.

Adopting an historical approach was very useful for the initial stages of the research. Where I mirrored historians' chronological approach and adopted an events focus, white mothers began to appear. The Richardson Report (CO 323/798/15) into the treatment and conditions of Coloured Seaman in British Ports established a pattern in identifying moral, physical and social problems and began to discuss a colour problem in terms of employment and immigration (Jenkinson 1996). Although this promoted the idea of temporary and localised conditions, the sub narrative was identifying reasons for coming and the conditions that made staying possible and desirable. I argue that questions of citizenship are why white mothers suddenly become so central to the debate. I was indulged by The Young Report, which dedicated an entire chapter to white women making their relationships with Black men explicit rather than inferred. Consequently, I only selected material that made direct reference to white women.

Strategies for Using Archival Records

At a practical level I needed a strategy for using the sources I found and for making a case that these seven pieces were representative of a national discourse. In this section I demonstrate a number of strategies I employed to select appropriate material: a corpus, the inclusion of empirical data, and the notion of a 'chorus'.

1. Corpus Construction

Bauer and Gaskell (2000:20) identify the systematic selection of some material to characterize as a method to manage questions of representativeness. With the exception of the Arnold and McNeill Surveys, the material I found I have termed Reports. This reflects a consolidation of ephemera and reported activity that is

compiled into a single Piece by the original keeper. They are not necessarily catalogued or recorded in this way. Piece HO45/25405 includes a number of different types of documents. A series of letters between the Secretary of State and various national Police Chiefs and/or Detectives is present. Police reports on surveillance activity with annotated notes. Newspaper cuttings and material relate to two cases pending in the courts concerning the 'procurement' of young white girls. Mr. F. Crosby's original letter and a draft response by the Secretary of State, comments between unknown individuals regarding Crosby's letter and the findings of police activity are included within the Piece. An internal memo from Mr. O'Donovan and several press articles, a letter from Mr. Roxby, who describes a careful two year investigation to establish the facts of interracial sex.

A researcher might use similar information to compile a report. I suggest that where the explicit remit is unclear, as is the intended audience, this part of the process was left in an unfinished state. In the case of Dr. Crosby, his letter mobilised the police to undertake research at a national level, submit formal evidence and secure an official response. The Bamuta Report is of a similar nature, comprising a range of different documents, whereas The Fletcher and Young Reports are more extensive and formal studies with no supporting material. The McNeill Survey includes previously edited material that was published alongside the confidential report, as does The Sharpe Reports. The documents I have used each involve critical engagement with the subject of white mothers and point to the extreme anxiety it caused to the safeguarding of society. Government departments, accredited institutions and influential actors contribute to a body of evidence.

2. Empirical Evidence Base

A fundamental aspect of all the reports is that they contain an active search for evidence, be it quantitative, qualitative, formal or informal means. Report on the *Conditions of Colonial People in Stepney (1949-195)* is marked confidential and archived within the Records of Welfare and Students Departments. In accompanying correspondence, the recruitment of African student, Derek Bamuta is discussed. The Bernhard Baron Settlement was closely associated with Sir Basil Henrique's, a Magistrate and Jewish Philanthropist. Henrique's appears influential in the report's production and dissemination as he is directly referenced in accompanying correspondence between the Home Office, the Colonial office and the Private Secretary at 10 Downing Street. On the one hand the document appears unofficial, whereas the involvement of senior government officials and key activists suggests Bamuta provided officials with an opportunity to undertake covert research. Acknowledged as a student of Bristol University,

Bamuta gave the report credibility without formalising their involvement. Equally, as a Black man there was an assumption that he could infiltrate the group more readily and get to the 'truth', where white researchers lacked in mediation.

Under close examination, the Piece includes the original handwritten submission and a typed version for wider circulation. This second document leaves a footprint of small amendments. Had I not seen the original document I would not have noticed traces of an official overview in the production of the document. Bamuta's authority is challenged and there is a subtle shift from I to he. A ghostwriter is identified where he claims '*he has stated*'. Report author and document writer are different people with different authorities. The former makes claims to an absent reader about the true meaning of these findings. The use of Bamuta to do quick and dirty research firmly locates the agenda within the public arena. The welfare of Black seamen was of less interest to officials, than the extent and nature of interracial relationships. The ghostwriter injects a sense of urgency where he writes that '*one must worry*' and that '*a cure for the effects needs to be found before the problem grows out of proportion*'. Bamuta is now re-positioned alongside those others with no legitimate claim to belong. Yet, Bamuta distances himself from the Black seamen he encounters, aligning with the Colonial and class interests of those who recruited him to undertake the research.

3. Chorus

I began to discard Pieces that appeared to contain a single voice in favour of those that suggest a collaborative response and collective voice. Arguably, this was the single most important factor when selecting material. I cite three reasons why I use the notion of chorus as evidence of a national discourse. Firstly, taken together the people involved in the varied reports production represent an intersection of different interests that feed into a dominant idea. The accepted position is not questioned or challenged. Due to the lack of controversy, the proposition is perceived to be commonly supported and valid. Insights gained from reading a breadth of material suggest, that in the reports I selected, a relatively cohesive attitude towards white women was in operation across a range of public bodies and official institutions associated with the nation.

Secondly, in varying degrees those penning the reports had the capacity to shape women's experience through the strategic influence they could exert. The involvement of academic, state bodies and the Church, moved women's experience beyond hearsay and anecdotal accounts to real encounters with those in a position of authority as agents of the state. Organisation represented

respected tiers of governance and a moral consensus that was anti race mixing. Thirdly, involvement of key actors moved 'evidence' beyond localized conditions and temporary acts, to speak of national concern. This was not a local deputation of angry residents, dismissible by those in government as insignificant. This was a considered and concerted attempt by wide ranging members of the collective for official policy and legislative action.

Strategies for Analysing Archival Documents

Unquestionably these reports are also partial in that they lack critical engagement with the terms in use. Unlike interviewing, these are one sided conversations with little space for challenge. This gives them an unfinished quality. Nehru (1946:47, quoted in Ames 1992:1000) writes about the palimpsest, *'on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously'*. He is arguing that the past is knowable as small fragments and momentary glimpses. This enables me to revisit, analyse and reflect upon materials that sustain and produce a national discourse.

1. Interpretive Prompt Sheet

I designed an analytical prompt sheet that combined a number of techniques and was helpful when interpreting different types of documents. Page one included general background information, a log of the search terms used to retrieve the document, source and type of document, publication and distribution and thematic terms referenced. A second set of prompts referred to context. Arguably this was the most inconsistently used due to limited trace data. I could not always establish why something was placed in the archive. In terms of textual analysis I recorded key terms, key events and individuals or organisation. I used direct interpretation to gauge relevancy to white mothers, paying attention to the concepts raised and arenas in which the discussion had occurred. I also considered symbolic meanings and the subject positions of those being written about before considering ranges of meanings and networks of difference. Not all categories were equally appropriate for all documents.

2. Thematic analysis

Riessman has researched extensively in the field of narrative inquiry and evidenced claims that thematic analysis is well suited to the study of narrative including those found in written documents (Riessman 2008:54). Mishler (1986) claiming the focus for this form of analysis is on what is said and what is told, rather than the telling process. I applied this approach to the archival materials I selected. I began by reading at a surface level to gain an overview of the

document, identifying words or phrases that stood out such as 'brutal' and 'deserted'. I re-read the document searching for the terms used to label white women with those ideas in mind. White women were invariably positioned alongside other commodities to be bought and sold. Evidence comes in the form of white mother's ongoing desertion. They are easily discarded when more favourable opportunities arise. This identifies Black male freedoms, but locates white mothers in a vulnerable position. These power structures supported my use of a feminist methodology.

In the Fletcher Report the concept of Black men's limited commitment to their white partners comes through strongly. I traced where this idea emerged within the document and how it was reinforced through association. In a number of segments, the text identifies white mothers who are shared by numerous Black men. This statement leads the author to conclude that mixed race households are sites of complex networks lacking in integrity. At the same time I was also reading around the literature, and the concept of boundaries may have been influential in my selecting particular passages for analysis. Linking archival research to the literature review indicates household complexity, whereas chaotic undefined spaces suggest boundlessness. These concepts regularly appeared.

Fletcher (1934) identifies a circle of white women who consort with Black men, claiming that 'fresh ones' are not brought in. White mothers' indicate insular, stagnant and bounded spaces with limited connections or possibilities. They are trapped in interior spaces, encircled by a perimeter boundary that was of their own making. I absorbed the way in which these claims were made and connected these to other emergent terms such as betrayal and regret. What was key was to retain the integrity of the individual documents and theorise from individual cases rather than make thematic connections across the reports. Invariably these connections can be made, but I began each report afresh as much as possible.

One of the limitations of this work is that the Reports could support far more detailed examination as they each contain a different focus. Within Crosby there are strong undercurrents of vulnerability, whereas Fletcher describes women in alien, isolating and unfulfilling relationships. Bamuta positions white women as sexual predators. For the purpose of the thesis they have been arranged chronologically. Equally, albeit unintended they begin and end in Stepney, which conveys a sense of continuity and closure.

3. Privileging Voice

As previously discussed, it was important to consider whose view was privileged in the analysis. Ali (2003) reasons power creeps into the research where there is an assumption of understanding what contributors are saying and in so doing, imposing our ideas. Clearly this is a possibility for all research, not just in the interview. One of my learning developments was an acknowledgement that in my attempt to handle the data in a sensitive way, there was a tendency to over analyse the material. I spent considerable time revisiting data to moderate my analysis and escape the tendency to analyse using dominant frames of reference and to moderate my representations (Silverman 2004).

I draw on Shostak (1998:404) whose work as an oral historian grappled with integrating different points of view into findings. I modelled this approach to consider the difficulties in integrating cross method findings. She identifies first person, official, and the researcher as distinct voices as being written into her research findings. In attending to this, I was drawn to elements of archival reports that contained quotations or suggested speech acts. In accounts of doing archival research, Hodder (1994:398) distinguishes between spoken or unspoken responses to indicate how the researcher captures and integrates live accounts within the text. I thought about how the voice of participants may have been collected, constructed, edited and presented. Equally, where these inclusions did not appear to be derived from a respondent, I wanted to go back and hear whose voice was being reported.

In the Fletcher Report, there are numerous examples of the researcher as author, writing into the report her own views under the guise of women's voices. '*A large majority of the women said that they regretted their association with coloured men...they were powerless, had become hopeless and embittered*' (Fletcher 1934:16). In these 'statements of significance' (Creswell 2002:119) authorial voice is ambiguously defined, yet the reader believes that it is the voice of the women we hear. Speech intimates a shared view, whereas in reality white women were silent. Creswell's (2002) suggests that this is tactical to encourage the reader to move on. Yet, elsewhere speech marks are used to identify authorship, '*nearly all of the mothers mentioned...saying that "everyone knew what the dances were held for"*' (Fletcher 1930:22). It is equally possible that the researcher has summarised her position and accredited this to women's own words.

In accounts where there is interplay between the researcher, the collective or an individual voice, I draw attention to how different authors read and represent white mothers in their research. I reason that authors operate as collaborators

where they draw in the collective through generalised statements. I use this to assert that what it means to be a white mother is intricately woven into the fabric of the nation and is determined as much by collective attitudes as women's subjectivities.

Narrative Research

I argue the version of white mothering placed in the public arena for scrutiny was a restrictive category. In layering archival material with data from the interviews, I unearth a complex and unfinished story about white mothering and contested meanings across public and private arenas. Whereas archives suggested sudden rupture, narratives point to pathways and connections, new affiliations and rekindled ties. The concept of tender ties points to the irreducible ties of kinship that sustained white mothers status within the nation. The complexity of these arrangements, demonstrate attachments in ways that expand and disrupt a sense of national belonging. This allowed me to make sense of Hammersley's (1992, quoted in Ritchie & Lewis 2003) notion of 'subtle realism'. The social world does exist outside of what individuals think about it, but individual subjective understandings are the only way to make the social world accessible. I use this this concept to consider the nation beyond an imagined status

Narrative Enquiry

I supplement historical materials with narrative research to move my focus away from symbolic and abstract theorisations of national borders where it acknowledged the situated and contextual nature of data (Mason, 2002:63). This allowed me to conceive of boundaries in more material terms and conditions of existence. White mothering was shaped by border interaction. In the archival section I sketched out the location of those borders. In the interviews, I collected stories from thirty women who gave birth to a mixed race child from the 1950s onwards. These stories varied in terms of style, duration and focus, depending on which element of stories contributors wanted to share. The general proposition put forward was to question how mothering a child perceived to be 'other' changed relationships or altered their status within the collective. I felt this was achievable as how we construct meaning is determined by how we imagine boundary architecture. Newman (2006) reasons border narratives reflect on how the bordering process impacts on daily life practices. This suggests that not all white mothers would consider the same borders, or that the impact of borders was destined to be negative.

According to Squire (2008) narrative is an intrinsically human activity in the way that it seems to offer a common sense and everyday account of meaning. This is

a form of contextualised storytelling infused with culturally embedded practices that transcend time and convey cultural currency. I believe that narrative offers coherency across the two methods and time frames in two ways. Firstly, textual and oral accounts identify the underlying cultural patterns of story telling. I liken this to Ricouer's concept of entanglement. Cultural narratives help to demonstrate temporal continuity and discontinuities between the methods I used. Transcripts were thematically coded, using established qualitative methods for handling interview data in line with semi structured interview approaches to look at these connections. Secondly, language is also culturally determined and patterns were identifiable within transcripts, through an historicized and racialised sentiment that produced difference. In combining archival and narrative research, I traced the contours of the nation's boundaries drawing attention to the symbolic structures, material and social practices that mark interior frontiers and exterior borders.

Narrative Inquiry

Moving onto the women's accounts enables the voices of white mothers in describing how they negotiate boundaries. By centralising their accounts I am able to theorise boundary movements in new ways. As discussed, I tried to allow women to speak, to show the contradictions and inconsistencies of group membership. In movement social distance takes on a number of possibilities, to be magnified, collapsed or have little meaning. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) suggest that interpretation remains open to re-interpretation and in the final reading meaning remains unpredictable. I embraced this potential as opening up new research arena. By adjusting the theoretical lens through which white mothering was analysed, I re-used the notion of 'crossings' that had dominated archival research and social commentary. The terms conduit, passage and bridge suggest mechanisms that link sites of difference at the limit lines.

I returned to the idea of intersectionality with a specific focus on lines that cross and disturb heterogeneous accounts (McCall 2005). I remained interested in understanding how different frameworks constrained or enabled the production of other, and the power and processes that supported that. For example, a white British mother with a Black British partner and mixed race child cuts across a significant number of factors. Multiplicity was evident through the difficulty in settling on a single category to call it. Furthermore, a white British mother with a Black African born partner and mixed race child draws attention to differently positioned elements. To avoid adopting a hierarchical approach, it is more significant to focus on their joint position as marginal. McCall (2005) calls for the

complexity of relationships to be examined across categories within groups in a comparative way.

In terms of understanding the collective, this approach has implications for becoming, belonging and non-belonging. Visible difference appeared an easily identifiable mode of differentiation, but was one that white mothers were easily able to challenge. Heritage and shared culture were used as the basis for that challenge. Gender marked and conveyed boundaries using skills shared with other English women, but in ways that challenged border controls. Feminist scholarship supported that challenge, claiming that boundaries can also represent potential sites of empowerment. For Black or working class women, boundaries are spaces of radical agency (hooks 1992). Class relations conveyed authority to white middle class boundaries, but white mothering created instability in whiteness.

So far, the methodology had attended to the underlying process by which nations come into being, and how particular formations give rise to a particular social structure. I now wanted to explore white mother's subjectivities as accounts that demonstrate how the nation was experienced. A primary objective was to forge links between collective processes of identification and those that both mark and were marked by them. Within the archive, mobile white women's bodies had emerged as subjugated and ambiguous zones of agency and change. Much like Helen of Troy, women's bodies were vessels that contained the seeds of continuity or disruption and threat. Taking the notion of disruptive bodies further, women were ostracized as 'out of place', or sexually deviant if they did not conform. The literature review pointed to the differential treatment of the concept of crossings. Transgressive boundary crossings were closely associated with criminalized, sexualized and racialised behaviours, one way traffic into the borderlands where there was a lack of autonomy (Van Kirk, 1980).

As sites of flawed and unusual identity construction, what can white mothers tell us about the nation? A number of theorists frame narratives as embodied performance. Meaning that performance is used to do something (Stokoe & Edwards (2006:59). In this account performance is being couched in narrative terms through the way in which stories are told, and storytelling affords tellers some degree of agency (Atkinson & Delamont 2006: 167). However, storytelling is also situated, and subject to a number of constraints. Language has already been discussed. Seeing narrative as storied performance enables experience to be theorised in a number of new ways. Langellier and Peterson (2004) claim

performance makes experience for others, brings experience to consciousness and recounts experience. In doing narrative, narrative is made.

Narrative approaches

In discussing a case for narrative research, Georgakopolou (2007) claims an overwhelming function for narrative is concern with identity construction. I favoured a broad genre of research and writing that was sensitive to the individual lived experiences, yet could point to larger structures to explain meanings such as 'social interactions in groups, cultural issues and historical context' (Denzin quoted in Creswell 2002:50). This is why involving white mothers is important in providing a different context for discussions on mixed race identities. Relying on an individual to provide explanations has allowed me to explore common patterns across the sample without collapsing single experiences into social phenomena. Indeed, it also remains important to stress that white mothers are a diverse group who may share little in common. A secondary function for the research was to challenge the idea that white mothers consist of 'women of a certain type' (Talibi 1996).

I draw on Riessman (2005) who clarifies narrative as a distinctive method that is cross disciplinary, focused on language and the interactionist nature of human relationships. Indeed, I distinguish narrative from other forms of interview research as a specific form of enquiry, which calls for particular interview, approaches, treatment of transcripts and analysis. Yet I equally acknowledge there is not a single definition. The most succinct differences appear between a Labovian and Post Labovian approach. The former conceives of narrative as a specific aspect of the text, the later incorporates all of the text and the interaction (Georgakopolou 2007). What I take narrative to mean is a story that contains a sequence of events or experiences, which through analysis draws attention to identifiable templates. Narrative also provides a means to identify my involvement in the construction of that story and to make visible how that construction occurred.

Within narrative there are substantially different views on the place of the individual teller, reflecting different theoretical positions of subjectivist and subject (Andrews et al 2008). Firstly, is the claim that narrators make sense of their lives through the stories that they tell. In this schema a central function of narrative is considered to be the expression of a 'preferred identity'. Narration is the means by which individuals develop, shape, refine and nurture a sense of being. They also, construct, expose and contradict understandings of the self in relation to

others. The self is considered an agentic and reflexive individual, and one with the capacity to write their own lives and express individual subjectivities. A second conception locates individuals within the texture of a discourse, occupying a subject position that is constituted and constrained by a number of competing Meta narratives and hegemonic discourse. Narrators become the stories they tell through the practices they enact and the resources available to them (Taylor 2006).

Data Collection Strategies

I began to develop the notion of embodiment further. I conceive of the body as a repository of experiences and memories. Not unlike an archive, it is a storage facility and place of secrets with difficult issues of access and censure that researchers negotiate. It involves moving what is in a private arena into a public space and requires a certain degree of ordering before it can be analysed or made sense of. Narrators also operate as their own gatekeepers, thinking and not speaking, remembering and not relaying, distorting or disclosing such that Kuhn (1995:2) argues, '*narratives of identity are shaped as much by what is left out of the account – whether forgotten or repressed*'. This locates the focus for enquiry on the affects of the method on the production of data, the context for data extraction and subsequent analysis in the (Arksey 2004). Yet, this takes away from the sensitivities that narrative methods try to build into their approach.

Recruitment

A gradual definition of the sample structure was considered an appropriate means to capture the different dimensions that impacted on white mothers' lives. Currently limited features about the population are known. Where the research aimed at theory building, Ritchie and Lewis (2003:79) argue this type of sampling strategy identifies central themes, which cuts across a variety of people. Indeed it proposes an ongoing dialogue between data collection and analysis. Initially, I believed that white mothers' experience would be shaped by locality. Location was of equal importance to the literature review and archival sources. Initially I had hoped to parallel early settlement and dispersal patterns. Yet, selecting a woman on the basis that she lived in Nottingham might be misleading. For example, this indicates a diverse and multi cultural environment but in identifying Edwalton, a predominantly white suburb supported by a 'good catholic school' suggests somewhat of a different experience. In this case neighbourhood would be a more significant level of analysis where place and community converge.

My initial feeling was that attracting women from a wide geographical base was an important way to overcome the localized focus of existing research. Yet, in

focusing on the complexity of everyday life, locality has increasingly moved away from the notion of bounded places. Vaiou and Lykogianni (2006:731) discuss increasing interest in constellations of social relations. This suggests that how place is organised and what people do in and outside of that is significant. This infers that the nature and extent of social networks and relations, including those that extend outwards to transnational connections, impact and shape experience. These networks challenge the notion of a clearly demarcated interior /exterior space. Many authors discuss a shift in women's engagement with localities following migration or post childbirth (Bryne 2006, 2006a, Ryan 2007, Bell 1993). They demonstrate increasing levels of investment in local relationships and networks for parents with young children, or for migrants in terms of changing and shifting local practices. These are classed, raced and gendered dimensions operating within a variety of social structures and support networks. As Vaiou and Lykogianni (2006) point to, local spaces are not totally independent or a segregation of identities, rather act as an intersection for many practices and priorities.

If collectives are neighbourhoods they can be then be theorized in a number of different ways: as community, place, commodity, consumption, and as a counterbalance to dislocation (Vaiou and Lykogianni 2006). This last point has particular relevance and I chose to probe this more fully in the interviews, exploring when women moved into certain areas and why and how have they responded to change. Equally, the notion of context suggests reacting to what is happening, intimating that white mothers may be proactive in the identities they construct and strategic in the symbolic and real boundaries they traverse. Movement can forge new identities and establish new routines, or re-inscribe and execute familiar practices. The interviews also provided the opportunity to explore the centrality of place, as opposed to presume it a defining characteristic of a woman's experience. Mobility problematizes birthplace and upbringing, which might be influential factors in experience, in favour of current place of residence. In interviews I tried to explore when movements had occurred and why.

Introducing 'ethnicity of partner' as a key axis of differentiation is again problematical. Not least, there are historical problems associated with shifting racialised terminology. Moreover, women use tribal affiliations as well as ethnicity, nationality, geographical transnational and skin colour as potential signifiers. Moreover, this picture was made more complex, by selecting women whose partner was first or second-generation residents in the UK. This seemed to be a factor in the degree of transnational ties that families sustained. At a

practical level, white mothers may have had more than one Black partner of differing ethnicities and it was very difficult to track who was being discussed over the course of an interview without constantly interrupting. Indeed, for a number of women whose relationships may have been less 'serious', it is equally plausible that the ethnicity of the father may be unknown.

Differentiating Black males by ethnicity remains the focus of contemporary debate, particularly in areas such as underachievement and exclusion (Sewell 1997, 1998). Selecting a case on the basis of an African or Caribbean ethnicity could also be problematic. This could steer the focus for the research into a gendered analysis of 'blackness', rather than centring the experience on the white mother, for whom ethnicity may be only one factor. The ethnicity of a partner may well be important but in unanticipated and complex ways. Indeed, women's 'English' ethnicity could not be assumed, and revealed complicated family histories involving Welsh, Scottish and Irish heritage. Importantly, what facilitates a white woman with Swiss parentage, claiming Englishness, yet occludes my mixed race children born of a white English mother and Black Londoner from doing so.

Access

What Creswell (2002:119) offered is a typology of methods, including use of a convenience sample. I purposely avoided interviewing women I knew personally, or with whom I had longstanding relationships or work experience. Only two women were recruited through a snowball sample. This is interesting as many of the women had contact with other white mothers. Access to participants was commonly sought through advertising. I placed two small pieces in the local press and sent bulletins to newspapers in areas outside of my immediate environment. I left contact cards in libraries with a brief summary of what I proposed to do. I also contacted specialist organisations most commonly those with an historical perspective and joined a number of electronic discussion groups. I wrote to a number of Elder projects, local, oral history groups and Black and Ethnic Minority organizations.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sampling strategy was determined to a degree by ease of access. Indeed, close proximity to London and at least five Shire counties was considered to offer a broad enough geographical scope to recruit 'ordinary women' as typical cases. In the process of pulling together a sampling framework, it was interesting to note 'determining factors'. I began by wanting to tabulate age, location, and ethnicity of partner, marital status and children to show the range of respondents included

in the sample. Other than age there were few 'fixed' categories available. Of the thirty interviews two women were very young and two in their early twenties. The majority of the women fell into the 30-40-age profile, with a similar number in their late 50s to early 60s. Two women are over seventy.

Of immediate concern was thinking through the diversity of women's lives to talk about the sample as a 'group'. Take Rose, who grew up in Devon and moved to London to study for a degree. She was twenty nine with a mixed race son of eight who was described as 'fair skinned'. For the past seven years he had grown and been educated in rural Devon. Paula returned to London to feel less vulnerable after a series of racial incidents and problems at school. Paulo described her immediate environment as multicultural, a small area of social housing with three other white mothers. She acknowledged a tenuous relationship to her birth family and relative absence of contact with the extended family. Paula was separated from her son's father with whom she had little contact other than to support his access to Tim. Her ex husband was 1st generation Nigerian who had come to England to study. They had met socially but their marriage was brief. At the time of the interview she identified as a single parent. However, she was intimately involved and a man from Sierra Leone with whom she spent much time. He played an active role in Tim's life introducing him to local community music networks. Where should the focus lie? Should primacy be placed on the ethnicity of her first partner as Igbo, as Nigerian, or her second partner as Sierra Leone, or on West Africa? The assumption that ethnicity could be extracted from a multiplicity of potential identity sites seemed somewhat misplaced.

This made me think about sample selection as analogous with standing in a spotlight. What the audience observe as significant are those elements that have been singled out as important through the focus they create and the areas that are shaded. The emphasis of the spotlight is to disillusion, as the assumption of significance and point of focus is contrived to draw you in. The full cast of actors is overshadowed where they remain partially, if not totally obscured. They are fundamental to the story. What is significant about this woman that places her in a group defined as women who have sexual relations outside of the dominant group. To identify a woman as a white mother of a mixed race child is to assume that this is the most important aspect of her identity.

Providing a complex picture for each individual woman is absolutely necessary to contextualise her experience, but totally impractical for a methods section. From experience, when reading research and research quotations, I often refer to the

appendix to establish who is being discussed. I was cautious that in this project readers would try to rationalise women's actions through individual biographies and to some degree I wanted to stop this from happening. I wanted to hear whiteness speak and so anonymise women to achieve this. I argue it is not that women have a Caribbean partner, are forty, or have a mixed race son that frames the experience, but that they belong to an exclusive collective.

Topic Guide

Designing a topic guide was far more complex and challenging than I anticipated. 'Race' reappeared in ways I was unprepared for.

'I went to Bedford Library with lots of books. I don't know why you do that, as there is never enough time to cross read. Anyway, looking at B. Byrne's, White Lives, a contemporary study of white women. It was interesting but it brought me back to thinking about whiteness as a concept – and to the perennial question. Are my questions asking for the right sort of data? Perhaps I need to have some firm questions at the end as a check – what does being English mean to you? How do you define yourself on the census? And your children and your partner – this feels very forced and totally at odds with the thesis aren't I exploring what that means in depth? She is looking at constructions of whiteness but seems to raise the question at the point of analysis. What being white means is inferred by what is discussed rather than what is asked and she then summarises in her findings. If women do not mention being white then surely isn't she seeing in that absence and silence her own construction of whiteness or using pre-existing versions of white to analyse her data. Again if you don't ask the question you are surmising what is said by what is not said. If you ask directly are you leading?

Diary entry Monday 26th Feb 2008

In the focus group 'racialised identities' had been discussed explicitly. The women were fully aware that the reason they were 'recruited' was due to the 'blackness' of their partner and child and that this was what marked their relationship as 'interracial'. An unambiguous discussion of 'race' provided a vehicle to express, refine, contradict and shape racialised meanings through the interaction itself. The women suggested that a lack of opportunity to discuss 'race' was a factor in its continuing power. Racism did texture white women's lives ranging from mundane and irritating everyday encounters to emotionally charged significant acts (Harman 2010). Importantly white mother's bodies were also racialised through their intimate sexual relations and the 'mixed race' children they bore. These women's bodies were periodically marked as strange

and unfamiliar places that disrupted boundary work in unexplored ways. Not only did white mothers challenge gender, but a gendered discourse of whiteness.

Bearing 'racial difference' was an important factor in their relationship to the nation, such that 'visible racial difference' was an aspect of the methodology that would not go away. There was a long battle to move away from considering the '*the significance of race in white mothers lives*', to '*how do white mothers discuss belonging?*' Where interviews consisted of semi-structured approaches, I designed an open-ended topic guide. The breadth of questions I looked at included how partners met and how relationships developed, how partners were introduced to family and friends, and the impact of cultural difference (food, language, tradition, ritual) on everyday lives. A second set of questions considered family and life events including the terminology that families used to describe multiracial households and the markers of difference that white mothers had tuned into. I explored the significance or meaninglessness of difference by discussing locations and spaces where white mothers sensed difference or awkwardness. This often led to discussions about racism and the settings where this emerged. Contributors were asked to reflect on how they managed difference within extended families and social networks and how difference manifest through homespace. Contributors also discussed what they saw as the benefits of being a multicultural household.

Quality in Qualitative Research

Research governance has been influential in the production of this thesis. By aligning with qualitative research methodologies, epistemic concern and direct practice I strove to demonstrate accountability and transparency. This moved the thesis beyond a reflection of a subject matter, to consider the crafting of the thesis and its knowledge claims as a process and constructive act. Arguably, these categories embody much of what Hammersley (2009:165) has presented as the 'failings of qualitative approaches' to deliver meaningful findings. In effect Hammersley (2009) positions qualitative research as outcome dependent. The trademarks of 'good research', including consistency, validity and integrity, still appear to sit more comfortably with quantitative methodologies. Against such criticism the paradigm continues to strive to demonstrate believability, cohesiveness and credibility under what might loosely be termed quality control. It is the issue of quality that I now reflect on.

I believe that despite its seemingly less scientific mantle, the proceduralisation of qualitative research has added value and improved standards. It is by embracing this process and contesting its position that I stand by the knowledge claims I

have made as representing one version of white mothers lives. I claim authorship of the version presented. The power in this approach has been to question the basis for discursive constructions that are so powerful and embedded to make it virtually impossible to provide a counter view. The treatment of historical and sociological approaches has already been addressed. I demonstrated strategies for the selection and use of archival, textual based resources and oral interview accounts.

Data Treatment

Thirty interviews were recorded and transcribed ranging in length from 17 to 62 pages of text. Field notes were taken to record supplementary information about setting, time of day and rapport, which I felt might have influenced the interview session. Interestingly, the sense of good or bad interview did not necessarily correspond with good or bad data. Transcripts were not analysed until the schedule of interviews had concluded. As previously mentioned, the nature of the interviews also appeared to shift in terms of the characteristics of the contributors and the moments in time they selected to disclose. The interviews with older women commonly resembled oral history accounts with high level descriptive detail of particular moments in time, events or settings. In some situations the interview resembled narrative inquiry with extended segments of talk and limited interviewer interjection. Women described relationship, intimate moments and reflected during the course of the interview as to what that might mean. In many cases and in particular with younger contributors, I sensed a much clearer pattern of question and response, where we covered a range of subjects in varying degrees of detail.

I would suggest that across the group, the research indicates women more commonly discussed partners than children. This may reflect where women began their 'story' or indicate that having a Black partner shapes their experience in ways that are more easily articulated, than having a mixed child, for which there is no other comparator. Most of the women only had mixed children, but had significant white males in their lives. Using this approach how can I ensure my research is good work and will have meaning to a wider audience? Quality underscores a significant element of qualitative research practice where it relies on the moral integrity and ethical practice of the researcher. I worked hard to find ways in which good quality could be designed into my research project and sustained throughout.

Poor quality was ameliorated through a process of constant reflection. There were a number of ongoing check points to ensure this occurred, including a

refined research design and programme of field work, including careful consideration of topic guide, structure of the interviews and selection of respondents. With such a diverse range of contributors and the mixed methods approach I adopted, it is perhaps unsurprising that the thesis could fall prey to the notion of a pick and mix approach where methods and approaches may appear epistemologically incompatible. Initially there was a tension in wanting to analyse the transcripts as personal and whole story accounts. This reflected increasing engagement with narrative enquiry as an approach, rather than mode of interview.

Following methods training in Narrative Research, I was struck by the value of using different analytical techniques and applying these at different stages of the research: in the treatment of the transcript, identifying the narrative, analysing the transcript. These insights provided tools to experiment and access meanings that I had not previously considered. Equally, they produced layers of interpretation that were sensitive to the tellers framing and response. Poindexter (2002) positions narrative as a move beyond more limited insights of content analysis. The strength of applying even a rudimentary Labovian analyses drew attention to structural aspects of the text. Reading stories as distinct elements with unique functions was a revelation. I was particularly interested in orientation and evaluative comments, elements of talk through which the narrator contextualises their position enabling the story to become more salient. Narrators would talk at length and then sum up in a single comment so *that is why*. Complicating actions allowed me to focus on moments when families were reminded of their difference. As Beth discussed, it was all going well, until a stranger confronts you in a park. Further analysis of the transcripts may reveal additional meanings that have not yet been explored.

Mishler (1986) marks an important intervention in research approaches driven by interview data. The notion of co-constructions, including the researchers utterances and prompts were all included in her analysis to incorporate the role of the researcher as a factor in the production of the data. I did not code or analyse the data to this degree. Equally Riessman (2008) considered innovation was necessary to open up large tracts of data that were missed through key word searches. She used the vividness of particular segments of text as an access key. Elsewhere, sequence, plot, or personal incident provides alternate options for analysis. I was influenced by Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method, operationalized through a single overarching question '*tell me about the events and experiences that are important to you.*' This method elicits a stream of response that the interviewer can then pick up on to explore in more depth. The

analytical requirements for this method mean it is only viable with a small sample. Wengraf (2005) uses a panel to undertake detailed analysis at a micro level of key segments of the text and uses this to construct potential hypotheses. By juxtaposing analysis of the told story within the biographical data of the lived life these hypotheses are repeatedly tested as the analysis develops. As discussed, by the time fieldwork was collated, it was inappropriate to attempt such detailed analyses across thirty interviews. Notwithstanding that a significant amount of time had already been spent on archival research. I resort to more orthodox transcription and coding.

I read the transcripts at a surface level and then re-read them to identify strong themes. I then began to log by thematically coding my material and amassed a significant number of and sub codes. Those themes were subsequently re-contextualised within the written document. Codifying women's experiences into a range of themes felt counter intuitive to my planned approach but was a pragmatic move forward. I draw on one example to demonstrate my dilemma. Unsurprisingly, one of the themes to emerge was racism. Using thematic coding, I could make some claims about white women's experience of racism. I could talk about the extent, nature and intensity of incidents, the breadth of racist actions and the characteristics and settings in which racism occurred. I also coded for how women responded. However, whole story analysis pulled me in a different direction. I focused on patterned experiences but contextualised those within the individual interview as the told story (Josselson 2006). Using this form of analysis, I believe demonstrates a more sensitive approach. I could position racism within a wider discussion of conflict, misunderstanding and tensions, in which racism was often a traumatic element. How women felt about that and choose to respond suggested something about how they understood racism. By using two different methods of interview analysis, I was struck by the limitations of different approaches. I felt unable to pay anything but lip service to racism. The ability for data to generate different interpretations through analytical approaches was a significant personal learning.

Summary

In this chapter I identified the primary sources and tools I consulted to interrogate the complex meanings of white mothering. I argued a sophisticated framework was necessary to consider top down, official accounts alongside bottom up, lay accounts of meaning. My research intended to explore personal account narratives told by women in boundary positions. Fleshing out those boundaries and the borderlines it constructs was crucial to establish whom, and on what terms, belongings were negotiated. Understanding positionality was an essential

step in the later work of narrative analysis. Rather than assume positionality, I needed to establish collectivity as more than the imagined collective of Anderson (1983) to determine white mothers' status within it.

A weakness in using a mixed methods approach is to gloss over the distinctiveness of each mode of inquiry and the limitations of each approach. I believe I have added a degree of quality control within the project that a single perspective would have lost. I reason that in performing as a state institution, embedded within archival material are traces of political systems and processes that sustain the nation over time and in the face of change. I argue the collective aims to control the past to determine how the present is experienced. Yet, complex intersections of class, ethnicity and place intersect with gendered constructions of white femininity to conjure in the imagination a set of restrictive possibilities that had their roots in particular notions of white womanhood and nation. There is then something very powerful about marginal and unheard voices finding their way in research reports pointing to a 'truthfulness' that has often remained unspoken. Combining these two approaches has, I believe, produced something of a creative enterprise. In the following Chapter 4, I provide a detailed analysis of the archival documents to craft out group 'terms of reference' and then go on to demonstrate transgressive and resistant acts.

Chapter 4: Disrupting the Nation: White women, Black men and sexuality

Introduction

This chapter begins by considering how women were represented in official discourse and public rhetoric, during a particular period in time. I undertake detailed analysis of seven reports in order to consider national narratives and discursive constructions of white women in relationships with Black men between 1930 -1955. I look at how archival sources articulate a particular identity and how a degree of consistency appeared across different archival institutions. White mothers raise fundamental questions about the status of citizenship and the symbolic nature of group membership; they are seen to exert particular preferences that make difference seem real. Where white women select Black partners, they conjure in the imagination a racialised boundary that they are then seen to step beyond. Finding material was extremely labour intensive and this is discussed alongside methodological issues in Chapter 2. Women are often scattered in isolated documents, making it difficult to develop a cohesive picture. These six reports come from a number of different archival sources and a larger body of material. Yet, they begin to suggest a patterned response in the way that they situate all white mothers as sexualised, degraded and ghostlike (Bynum 1992).

Academics and historians locate European white women in the expanding spaces of Empires. Drawing on historical sources and Colonialism (Hall & O.Rose 2006, Stoler 1995) white women occupied a central yet subjugated role in the construction of spaces that were increasingly segregated socially. Border zones allowed the ideals of Europe to flourish, yet rearticulated social and sexual boundaries along racial and gendered lines. In the work of Callaway (1987:85), is an interesting discussion with examples of white women in Colonial Nigeria who withstood such temptations. McCulloch (2000) discusses European women's voting rights in Rhodesia. Arguably women's place was under considerable scrutiny. Interracial contact was in fact the site of extreme inspection and antagonism between Colonised and Coloniser (Callaway 1987). Yet, the claim of feminisms is that far from passive agents, women were active in manipulating their race, class and gendered identities.

In Britain, white women were no less political in their actions, playing a role in the racially mixed spaces and cultures that developed throughout the interwar and post war periods. In *Africans in Britain*, Killingray (1994:3) addressed claims that the Black population was less noticeable in the nineteenth century and cites intermarriage as a plausible reason. As such he points to a change in the

boundaries of Black Britishness during this time and a substantial increase in the mixed race population. I argue that white women were a reason and a means by which Black British families began to develop and in the co-construction of racialised spaces. Yet, research on the development and maturation of British Black communities neglects white mothers as political agents or simply as mothers of 'Black British children'. Interpreting this absence draws attention to wider issues of solidarity, identity and belonging.

Using British sources we can begin to unearth 'our' own stories, exploring official interest in the 'white girl problem' as a response to shifting gender and race relations in the aftermath of war. Bland (2005) writes in the aftermath of the Great War an assertion of Black rights and women rights coalesced suggesting this was a period of extreme pressure on national boundaries and acute anxiety about nationality. Archival material situates white women within racially mixed environments that were increasingly socially segregated. Moreover, it says something about what it meant to be a sexually active woman who sought out intimate relations with Black men and the circumstances under which those choices were made.

Historical writings about the interwar period suggest a colour problem and colour bar operated (Constantine 1954, Little 1947). Contemporary theorisations conceived of this in a number of ways particularly through accounts of economic dislocation and competition for employment (Jenkinson 1996). May & Cohen (1974) stress that interracial sex has been under theorised, yet is a consistent theme. Re-interpreting the colour problem as interracial sex draws attention to official interest in the sexual associations between white women and coloured men throughout the interwar and post war periods. Popular and official discourse positions white women in opposition to national interest and as a potential threat to national identity. This is a position that gives credence to the intense scrutiny of white mothering, as a site of special scientific and social interest (Flemming 1929). Moreover, to focus on 'Anglo negroid children' and 'breeding' between local girls and African or West Indian men in the docklands, suggests that particular intersections of class, gender and race are significant.

The Rise of the Colour Problem as Interracial Sex

To focus on the interwar period is to place a spotlight on a nation rebuilding on a world stage. The First World War had unlocked gender from its restrictive framework (Bland 2005) such that concern with white women's sexual immorality had an international flavour, '*many women had gone kaffir and were beyond redemption*' (McCulloch 2000). The 'colour problem' was sexual acts between

different races, a situation that resulted in legislation, including in South Africa passing The Immorality Act (1927). Anti-miscegenation was already well established in America, providing a framework to criminalise sexual unions between whites and Blacks, forcing them to be illicit and casual affairs. With no such legislation in place in the United Kingdom, how did the state respond to consensual sex between white women and Black men? Were interracial unions accepted? How did gender problematize that stance?

In the US, a body of feminist scholarship has explored the marking and making of racial boundaries using archival sources. The sources I consulted commonly depict complex relationships post slavery in the antebellum south. These social and economic changes were of such magnitude that some scholars argue the period is one where racial lines were drawn and policed more actively than any other period. Hodes (1997) writes of the increase in lynchings that happened during the same period when Black men and white women asserted newly found rights. Feminist scholars draw on legal documents, including court transcripts, to explore the nature of illicit sex between white women and Black men (Fisher 2002). Using this approach has helped to contextualise subtle shifts and violent developments in the construction of sexualised and racialised boundaries in the Southern States (see Hodes 1997, Kierner 1998, and Faust 1996). The literature is particularly interesting for this thesis, as it exposes inconsistencies in the way that local populations and public officials respond to transgressions. Although there is little detail as to why this might be, what is intimated through these accounts is the context in which transgressions occur precipitates 'their outing'. Hence, this provides grounds for exploring when white women have become visible and why, and for developing a specifically British focus.

The Inter War Period

In 1930s Britain, race remained tied to measurable physical difference, alongside racial prejudice. A number of academics theorised the growth of a colour problem as an unofficial response to change. Immigration was believed to bring about localised conditions, resulting in the operation of an informal colour bar. Racism was more easily accommodated when it was considered the natural outcome of instability and newness. It was not expressly considered to result from interracial sex (Nagel 2003). Academics have equally theorised the colour problem as one of economic dislocation. Racial difference was seen to marginalise Black men in segregated zones and particular occupations, such that racism was an institutional effect of Empire, Trade, and Colonialism. At the local level, racial violence erupted through fierce competition for housing and employment. Despite the strong overtones of interracial sex as a trigger to local

hostility, as a serious analytical category, it has an ambivalent status. Jenkinson (1996, 1998) asserts that to adopt this as a research focus would compromise any serious attempt to study the economic basis for hostility.

I believe this period represents an epistemological shift, changing the focus for anthropological research. There are clear links here with the literature review (see chapter 3) particularly in introducing the work of Georg Simmel. From Simmel came the concept of social forms, patterns of interaction whose repetition accounts for the coherence and reproduction of bounded social forms – the collective (Barley 1989:42). Park, Thomas and Burgess concentrated on social structure as rules that varied over time and place. Dewey and Mead focused on power and action, embracing the idea of the palace of differing interpretative frameworks (Barley 1989: 42). Influenced by the Chicago School, the research gaze turned inwardly, routinely, studying forms of social life in the city at close range. Locality studies presented new opportunities to look at the distribution and incidence of social problems and to theorise deviant subcultures in the ‘foreign quarters and colonies ‘within’. Strangeness and unfamiliarity surfaced in the ‘*coloured quarters and foreign colonies*’ (Banton 1955) of metropolitan districts, and was embodied in the increasing numbers of mixed race children in the docklands of Britain. Social investigators were keen to examine just what went on in ‘coloured families’ and the emerging racial enclaves (Collins 1952, Glass 1960). A very private affair was now at the centre of public interest forcing the sexualisation of race and racialisation of gender into focus.

Methods and Approach

Using primary data, I begin to explore an official response to interracial sex and to the agency of those women involved. To what extent were these reports narratives? How could they say anything about a nation? How did I integrate these different documents into a single analysis?

The Fletcher Report (National Archives HO 45/25404)

The Fletcher Report was funded by the Liverpool Association for the Welfare of Half Caste Children and promised an academic study of Liverpool based ‘coloured families’ and the pressures they faced. The term, most possibly influenced by the South African Union, was a political label applied to homes established by local white girls with Indian, African, or Arab partners and their ‘half caste’ children. Interest in poverty was not new, but the racialisation of the families experience was. As such, it reflects on localised conditions of family life by considering the racial composition of the household, rather than socioeconomic factors alone. A considerable amount of criticism has developed

particularly about Fletcher's competence. Yet, she was an academic, affiliated to a University and guided by the supervision of Professor Roxby.

Muriel Fletcher sampled 450 families '*having negro blood in them*' (1930:12). Fletcher suggests that unlike other ports, coloured men in Liverpool had not confined themselves to the docklands, but the study appears to focus on those that have. Equally, the sample was drawn from a social services register, suggesting that those families who participated were already identified as vulnerable. The report logs their experience as, '*The History and Nature of the Problem, the Extent of the Problem and the Cause of the Problem.*' For Fletcher a colour problem was seen to reside within, rather than for, the families that participated. The '*extent*' of the colour problem was both quantifiable and visible. It was the growing '*number of 'Anglo Negroid' children born of white English women and West African men, handicapped on account of their visibly distinctive features, and the difficult conditions of their upbringing*' (Fletcher 1930:15).

Included in the key sections (26/27) of the report are discussions about the measurable effects of racial hybridity. Fletcher pays close attention to hair, eyes, nose and skin colour and the inheritability of genetic disease, indicating a pervasive Eugenicist influence. Adopting this position influences the research project such that interracial sex is considered an incompatible and unnatural act. Fletcher saw that the foundations of a colour problem lay in white women's associations with Black men and deployed various means to discredit relationships. Initially Fletcher provides a typology of white mothers' character based on 36 cases. Women's motivations were grouped into four categories: those with illegitimate white children whose father refused to marry them; those who were mentally weak; prostitutes, both those adopting a lifestyle choice and those borne out of necessity; and young women whose sense of adventure left them '*unable to break away*' (Fletcher 1930:22). Twelve women are unaccounted for.

A strong focus documented throughout the report is to demonstrate Black men's limited commitment to their white partners. In a segment that considers the '*Coloured Man's Attitude to White Women*', Fletcher immediately stresses that there are no Black women in Liverpool implying that white women are women of last resort. Where coloured men are identified as promiscuous, they are seen to display limited commitment to the white women they socialise with. Black men used white women to secure unemployment benefit or for sexual gratification, then deserted and discarded them when better or more preferred circumstances

arose (Fletcher 1930:20). In this statement the quality of attachments that white women can form outside of their group are shown to be severely restricted.

Fletcher comments that even when married, white women were not off limits to other Black men's sexual advances. The inference is that Black men had little respect for any white woman or the legitimacy of her marriage. Fletcher sees that women operating outside of normative group practice are marked in such a way that that they remain approachable. Hence, the respectable status conferred through marriage is contested. Attachments, even when legal, are shown to be disingenuous and not recognised. This suggests that the status of marriage between a white woman and a Black man is inauthentic and culturally misunderstood. In describing '*a circle of white women consort with coloured men and these women pass from one man to another... as a rule fresh ones are not brought in*'. Fletcher invalidates individual actions by losing women within a notional group. The symbolism of the circle suggests they are somehow connected through their uncharacteristic qualities and the circle forms a boundary position that locks women into that space. What Fletcher proposes is that so few women are prepared to sleep with Black men, that they need to be shared and it matters little who they are. Where she writes '*three or four coloured men share a room and have one white girl between them*' (Fletcher 1930:17) they are valueless as individuals. They appear as commodities to be bought, sold and shared by a community of seafarers.

Fletcher proposes Black men, regardless of marital status, have no emotional investment in these women. The nature of interracial relationships is revealed as having a purely functional or sexualized basis, such that even marriage lacks emotional intimacy and exclusivity. Where Fletcher writes, '*women go to other men's houses while their own husbands are at sea, in order to eke out their scanty income*' the subtle message is one of prostitution and perverse behaviour. Women have betrayed their husbands and the symbolic status of marriage is undermined through their irregular acts. She continues, '*the other women in the house take it in turns to look after the children on the nights on which the mother is absent*' (Fletcher 1930:20). In this segment Fletcher places white women as sexually immoral and improper guardians, yet suggests these practices are condoned by like-minded women.

A methodological point that arises is the extent by which Fletcher draws on women's own words. This is somewhat ambiguously defined and discussed later in this chapter. Indeed, by refocusing on women's experience of fear, Fletcher could have developed a strong counter narrative. Seeking refuge in a 'coloured

house' could have been a safety strategy that women resorted to. Indeed this would be supported where Fletcher discusses that during periods of protracted absence, women claimed they felt unsafe in their own home. But Fletcher underplays the panic; isolation and vulnerability that white women were exposed to. It was common knowledge that white women were socially ostracised and could not necessarily rely on police protection. Women alone may have been vulnerable to racial violence and targeted threats in areas known for racial hostility. Although Fletcher comments that *'coloured men are rarely seen in the streets with white women even when married'* (Fletcher 1930:20) does not connect this to wider concerns with personal safety, but rather infers that Black men are ashamed of their white partners by making thematic links across the report.

In attending to the women's narrative, a changing relationship to the locality is revealed where women did not want to become public property. Women expressed difficulty in maintaining relationships with white peers. They withdrew from wider society and avoided socialising with friends who had white partners. They no longer accessed organisations that white couples were known to frequent. Women expressed sensitivity to shifting racial dynamics, resorting to self-reliance or increasing dependence on new contacts and partners, particularly once a relationship became public knowledge. This insight could have been invaluable but Fletcher interprets their consciousness as a form of self-pity. They *'regretted their association with coloured men but once having taken the step, were powerless to change, cut adrift, and became hopeless and embittered'* (Fletcher 1930:23). The concept of *'cut adrift'* suggests an exiled state and embitterment infers women are disillusioned with their choice.

White women come under even closer scrutiny in *'Chapter IV, The Woman Who Consort with Coloured Men'*. In her opening address, Fletcher claims that, across the ports, 90% of the white women in mixed relationships are prostitutes. Yet immediately there is a caveat. Fletcher writes that in Liverpool, women who live on immoral earnings became prostitutes *'because of the fact they are living with a coloured man'*. Whether these women used prostitution as a means to raise money in economically drastic situations or were exploited by Black men remains unclear. In claiming that *'to the ordinary casual visitor these women will say that they married a coloured man because he makes a better husband than a white'*, Fletcher assumes she accessed real feelings. As such the report makes claims based on the strength that women were *'anxious to confide in someone'* (Fletcher 1930:23). Yet, Fletcher discounts the meanings that women share with her as a façade for more deeply felt emotions of regret. Women's

'sensitivity to criticism' was considered the motivation to falsify accounts. She interpreted this as *'realising that they have chosen a life which is repugnant'*. I suggest that where Fletcher can only understand women's positive stance as a strategy to exonerate improper behaviour, her own bias becomes evident. As such she restricts the relationship to a soulless and sexualised discourse of unnatural and irreconcilable difference.

At no time does Fletcher consider that colluding with the researcher was a strategy to make her feel more comfortable with their decision. In this confessional state, white women claimed they felt used in order to obtain a domicile. Black men were *'heavy drinkers and gamblers, while their sexual demands pose a continual strain on white women (Fletcher 1930:21)*. White mother's felt responsible for their children's un-employability and marginality. In this paragraph, a number of stereotypes are reinforced yet no direct quotations appear to support these statements. What is striking is that at no time does Fletcher acknowledge external factors that impact on the family, such as racism. Yet, it was clear to the researcher that a colour bar operated and that local employers were to all intents and purposes discriminating, particularly against mixed race girls (Fletcher 1930:21). It was internal dynamics of the interracial relationship that were the primary focus.

For Fletcher, what exists outside of Black/white dichotomies is an unstable position and her exploration of the mixed household can be seen as an attempt to elaborate this point. The Fletcher Report is one of the first to locate white women in the coloured household, a label which itself suggests an official act of exclusion. Fletcher develops the notion of a boundary transgression where she claims, *'once a woman has lived with a coloured man, the house appears to become a club for any coloured men in port'*. Women now occupy a racialised zone outside of white society. Where she writes *'a white woman who has once mixed with coloured men is unable to break away and is never safe in her house if her husband is away for any length of time'*. The term *'once'* is used in both statements to indicate the fragility of women's position should they step into the boundary zones. What she stresses is the extraordinary impact that racial transgression has on women's position. Women who elect a non-white partner place themselves outside the protection of white society.

The uniqueness of racial transgression is such that there is no road back. It is considered the most destructive act and this is emphasised where she claims that, *'the moral problems which surround her appear to be peculiar to those women who form relationships with coloured men'*. Coloured households are

sketched out as chaotic spaces of difference and disorder, a permanent position where *'she cannot free herself from the coloured men in the district'* (Fletcher 1930:25). In summary, Fletcher sketches the household as a site of complex family networks lacking in unity. The home is a site of mutual resentment, hostility and sexual perversion. Children witness parents with multiple partners and lax attitudes. Fractious relationships between siblings with different fathers cause tensions and white children are torn between the working class community they were socialised into and the racially divisive space they now inhabit. White children are ashamed, and step parents forced to care for children for economic reasons, are neglectful. Women inhabit these spaces alone, marginalised by their whiteness and trapped by their degradation.

This position is developed further through a diagram, which maps out social networks within one family unit, to reveal a pattern of extensive sexual contacts and promiscuity. A proliferation of formal and *'illegal unions'* are depicted. Three white women and a wife are immersed within a complex web of intimate relationships with numerous men. In all cases, despite it being the male who is knowingly engaged in serial relationships, it is the white women's promiscuity that is emphasised. References to white women's poor housekeeping skills and levels of literacy, their lack of common sense and the more scathing claims of a white mother's inadequacy to parent a mixed child were merely symptomatic of the bigger picture. It was a type of white woman, one that would have a sexual relationship with a Black man that was considered the underlying cause of their children's disadvantaged lives, thus, the real colour problem. Crucially the report painted a picture of loveless households where racial hostility was rife.

In a very real sense, the pathology of children born of mixed relationships reflected the inadequacy and degraded status of their white mother. By conceiving the basis for the parental relationship to be a deficit model of last resort or sexual licentiousness, Fletcher undermined any grounds for a positive mother/child relationship. This notion is a recurrent theme across the archival documents I sourced and appears a method to undermine white women in their relationships. Tabili (1996:13) also theorises this as marrying down and moving backwards. White mothers were discredited from possessing any positive qualities and whiteness was no longer seen to convey any benefit.

Despite its local focus, the issues Fletcher raised resonated with those working in the Port areas of other cities, who chose to use the momentum to mount a further appeal to government for repatriation of Black seamen and more restrictive anti miscegenation legislation (Carr 1992). Those with a degree of authority were

influenced by the claim that coloured families were a growing evil. Harris, of the Anti-Slavery Society, petitioned government to legislate against race mixing. He was not alone. There is evidence of repeated appeals for anti-miscegenation laws on similar lines to those operating in the Union of South Africa. Most frequently requests were by senior police officials (See Rich 1990:7). Questionnaires designed to supplement findings show professionals substantiate the view that the colour problem resides within individual family units.

The Crosby Report 1934 National Archives PRO174583

As a voice from the ground, the Crosby Report differed in terms of academic influence, scope and depth, yet was effective in mobilising government officials and public resources. The report amounts to a formal investigation of interracial unions in metropolitan districts, but conceived of within a very narrow focus of coercion and immorality. White women in mixed relationships were placed in an arena for public scrutiny, investigation and sanction, but with unanticipated results. In March 1934, Dr F. Crosby felt compelled to write to Mr O'Donovan, MP at the House of Commons about the issue of white slave traffic. What Crosby was demanding was government action against the *'rings of coloured white slave traffickers now operating'*. Black Peril and White Slave traffic were pervasive influences in the Colonies at this time and perhaps influenced his ideas (McCulloch 2000). To demonstrate his commitment and expertise, Crosby had undertaken a *'personal tour of our seaports ...and the conditions in the colonies'*. He assumes personal responsibility for scrutinising interracial relationships and raising official awareness of such subversive activities.

These concepts are central to the investigation but are not made explicit. I argue that Dr Crosby draws on his position as a professional expert in medical matters and suggests he is acting as a representative of the Catholic Church, by the use of their letter headed paper to give his arguments weight. In doing so, Crosby communicates civic responsibility and citizenship rights. He makes claims about the procurement of young [white] women for immoral purposes by coloured men. Choice of partner is not a matter of individual preference, but a civic duty largely determined by national interests. This positions white women in a particular relationship to the nation. In making his case, Crosby asserts white male authority over geographical landscapes and white female bodies. Where he frames white women as *'young girls'*, he evokes a degree of paternalism and a desire to protect white women's sexuality from barbaric and alien practices. Not least his focus intimates the colour problem has not been contained within the segregated spaces of the docklands, but is seeping out into the wider population including his hometown Southampton.

The call to arms frames the government as out of touch with what was happening on the ground. In a very real sense, Crosby is claiming the contamination of the nation. He begins his appeal by highlighting a number of recent convictions and includes newspaper clippings as evidence of lewd activities reported in the press. *'From Convent to Black men'* headlines the story of young catholic girls fresh from convents being enticed into brothels controlled by coloured men. The headline draws on powerful metaphors of the sacred and pure, juxtaposed with immorality and degeneracy. Where Crosby is also positioned as a Church representative, he conveys a sense of authority and power to his writing.

What Crosby appears to successfully achieve is to direct government attention to the threat that Black men pose to white women's sexuality. Indeed, the notion of white slave traffic and Black peril was a well versed narrative (McCulloch 2000). Hence his letter is a rallying call to protect the nation. In an internal memo dated 10th March 1934, O'Donovan forwards Crosby's letter along with a number of other articles including an article by Hamilton McGuinness. Petitioning the government on anti-miscegenation legislation reflected a subject of considerable interest amongst the public. *'The association of coloured men with white women even when it does not delve to the wider depths of brothel keeping, prostitution is already creating serious social consequences in Liverpool, Cardiff South Shields and elsewhere'* (PRO174583). Although it is unclear whom the subsequent correspondence is between, Crosby's letter forms part of an official request to investigate the matter. Police responses were received within the week of 17th - 24th April, indicating the speed at which the investigation occurred. Nine Metropolitan Chief Constables reported to the Under Secretary of State, including Swansea, Hull, Tynemouth, Liverpool, Salford, Manchester, Glasgow, South Shields, Cardiff and Newport, interestingly not London.

Hull City Chief of Police, Alien Registration Branch reported on the 17th April 1934 that *'after careful enquiry there has been no case of any coloured man having procured a white girl for the purpose of living on her immoral earnings'*. In addition there was no recognised district of the city where they (coloured men) reside and they (areas) *'remained exceptionally quiet'*. Salford Detectives identified a similar pattern on 18th April 1934. Hence, in two ports identified at the close of World War I as sites of racial violence, by the 1930s robust policing practices and legislation appear to have been effective counter measures. Although admonishing Black men's character, the inference that women in these relationships were prostitutes remained intact.

In a number of towns there had been an increase in refreshment houses, a euphemism for meeting places and brothels. White women managed a number of these businesses. In effect white women provided Black men with social spaces to congregate, cultural spaces for a taste of home, and places to meet and discuss political and economic developments. The police acknowledged that the cafes were subject to frequent visits. As such they provided opportunities for intense surveillance of relationships that developed. Prostitution provided a legitimate means to pursue relationships as illegal activities. Police harassment and the threat of criminal charges against women in mixed relationships were very real. In his report dated 23rd April 1934, the South Shields Chief of Police commented that *'a very close watch is kept on the refreshment houses and boarding houses here and any new girls found on the premises are questioned and enquiries made regarding them and their background'*. This shows the extent of police intrusion into white women's lives on account of their choice of partner. Women are asked to explain themselves, extending to formal enquiries into background and character. What this suggests is the need for the police to identify the women in a particular way and for women to make formal representations for their actions.

The Chief of Hull City Police commented that he *'had met young women at these houses and their excuse for being there was that they had been called for a cup of tea'*. In this statement, the Police used occupational status and gendered authority over women to make them accountable for their presence. This can be seen in the text as *'their excuse'*, a line that indicates that women need a rationale for their actions in the face of white males and a public expression of solidarity. However, a second inference of a white girl doing as she is told can also be identified. Whilst this indicates male authority over women, it suggests that women play with gendered constructs. In the response she is *'called for a cup of tea'*, she demonstrates her subordinate gendered position as an English woman in the face of racial difference. It is her gender that places her in this predicament and not the Blackness of the males involved. Thus she makes a similar call for solidarity but for different reasons.

Liverpool Central Police Office reported that as a direct result of Crosby, prosecutions against Mary McCauley, Samuel Joseph McCauley and Abas Mohammad had occurred. Concurring with evidence from South Shields and South Wales, examples of white women's involvement in the 'Procuration of young women for immoral purposes' were highlighted in the Cardiff Report dated 24th April 1934. Clearly cases have some substance, but details of a case heard at Glamorganshire Assize in Swansea, provides a different context. A white

female homeowner had previously been charged with '*keeping seamen in an unlicensed house*' and subsequently tried to find a wife to legitimate domicile. It is not clear what motivations lay behind this, or the degree of coercion she inflicted on the prospective wife. These potentially dangerous women colluded against the law and so were positioned as operating outside of it.

Referring again to the report from South Shields dated April 1934, the chief of police comments that '*a large number of coloured seamen are living with white girls in the borough and so far as my experience goes whilst most of the women are of immoral character they do not practice prostitution but are simply maintained by them*'. Clearly, the Chief of Police does not intend to suggest that all women kept by their husbands are prostitutes. Yet, in failing to identify on what terms these particular women are immoral, he associates being a housewife with being a kept woman. In a further comment he claims '*a number are married as a matter of fact and appear to be quite satisfactory wives*'. Here he undermines the notion of immorality where he identifies their married status. The tension this highlights is how to maintain the discourse of immorality within marriage.

A close analysis suggests Crosby may be seeking to formalise gendered relationships, the status of marriage and its relationship to the state along racial lines. Consequently the report points to a pervasive feminine presence that unsettles a gendered construction of women. Women are out of place and Crosby wants them put back. As such he cannot understand women in mixed relationships as a rational choice, only victims in a plot against the Empire. Yet, gendered and racialised hierarchies become complex and intertwined with his own position, such that he is unable to conceive of white women's agency. In this way, Crosby fundamentally rejects the idea that white women could be attracted to Black men; only those willing to prostitute themselves and their nation would do so.

Therefore the police response complicates matters by creating a complex picture with no clear patterns across the country. This might explain why the document represents something of an unfinished project. Data has been collected, but not formalised. Why might this be? Black men were not identified as brothel keepers or slave traffickers, but white women were identified as sexually active and predatory. Evidence emerged to suggest that white women used Black men as a means of financial aid or as spaces for extra-domestic spheres of influence. A letter from the City of Glasgow Police department, on 23rd April 1934, writes that '*it must be admitted of course that a great deal of immorality goes on*

between coloured men and white women in this city but it is most regrettable to have to say that it is the white women of all creeds and denominations who do the importuning'. Summarising their response, from raids on thirteen houses of Ill Fame in the Glasgow area, only two had coloured men associated with them and in both cases, their white wives were the principal owners.

In Crosby we can begin to detect a subtle shift in a wider discourse, away from the idea of white female victim in need of white male protection, to disorderly white women requiring control. Arguably this is the pretext with which Crosby initiates his enquiry. Yet, by the close of the investigation, it is white women who are identified as predatory. Either proposition requires that white women must accede to white male authority. It is interesting to consider this alongside a broader social shift marking the increasing independence of women as wage earners and heads of households.

A draft letter to an unknown recipient concludes that Dr Crosby's initial evidence is flawed. Yet it stresses *'the association of white women and girls with coloured seamen is of course prevalent in many areas particularly south Wales, Liverpool and South Shields and the social consequences are a matter of some concern to various local authorities but this is a wide problem of baffling complexity for which no ready solution exists or I fear is likely to be devised'*. The Home Office gave assurances that they would play some part in *'dealing with a problem that for various and obvious reasons is bound to present extreme difficulty in combating'*. Despite evidence to the contrary the imagined status of white women remained unsettled, the social consequence unexplored.

The Sharpe Reports: 1933 and 1937

The plight of economic disadvantage appeared to refocus academic attention on the conditions for 'coloured families' living in Britain. Unlike Fletcher, Sharpe offered a more contextually grounded account of the problems faced by Black families. According to Rich (1995:134) these reports were funded by the Methodist Church and London Group on African Affairs, and published through the Keys - the official journal of the League of Coloured People. Nancy Sharpe produced two reports with support from the League of Coloured People (LCP 1931-1955) The first report considered The Coloured Population of Cardiff (Sharpe 1933:44). The second considered The Prospects for Coloured Children in England (Sharpe 1937: 11). The LCP aimed to secure equal rights for Black Britons, an identity they saw could be established through gendered and class distinctions (Spy Rush 2002). The LCP rejected marginality by claiming class

privilege and used this status to reject the view of whiteness as a superior position. This attitude is pervasive throughout the documents.

Nancy Sharpe's survey of London, suggests that upwards of two hundred and fifty working class families with '*British African or West Indian heads*', were living in the East End of London at the time. By using the term '*British African*' she creates a sense of belonging, a legitimate claim to access resources that all British citizens share. Most of the men are identified as having '*married woman from the dock areas, people whose families have lived there for some time and usually the children of docks*' (Sharpe 1933:11). Sharp is developing the notion of belonging through this statement, suggesting that white wives had longstanding roots and connections to the area. Importantly, they confer a legitimacy to belong through family history, but one that is ultimately contested. For Sharpe, these wives were members of a historically situated community suggesting a large degree of continuity not radical change. Black men associated with sea trades continued to reflect commonplace patterns of settlement; one based on class and occupational status, but one that gave rise to discrimination on the basis of visible difference.

Throughout the report there appears to be a sensitivity to accentuating racial difference, such that, within the writing, there is a political strategy to conflate visible difference between host nation and families of newly arrived immigrants. Arguably, class based differences are a more important relation of difference. I suggest Sharpe identifies family's not coloured families to demonstrate this. 'Children' are the particular group under observation, yet she is careful to distinguish these from 'other children', meaning those more generally associated with the area. In adopting this approach, she makes a political statement claiming that the conditions for coloured children emerge from the shared landscapes they inhabit and the particular effects of racial discrimination. In these marginal spaces, families were trapped geographically between the sea and the town proper. Intense concentrations of families lived together in dark, damp and notoriously poor conditions. Rooms were small and homes commonly had shared facilities. The coloured household was located in 'other coloured men's houses', with strangers or the relatives of white wives (Sharpe 1933:11). Clearly some white wives were able to maintain relationships with their families despite having a Black partner. This is a position that suggests public reaction was not consistently negative.

What differed in these families is unknown. Sharpe goes on to identify that despite disadvantage '*domestic relations are often satisfactory and marriage is*

quite as often happy' (Sharpe 1933:11). As such, cultural difference is not seen to create the additional source of tension presumed to exist within mixed race households. In point of fact Sharpe claims there is less friction in these households, stating that white wives have improved their living conditions through a Black partner. Financial disputes and drunkenness, commonplace in white working class households, did not generally occur. Sharpe writes that Black men *'did not keep an undue amount of his earnings, have lack of thought for the women in little things, leaving all thought and work for the children to his wife and the question of drunkenness. Men are generally attached to their homes and spend much of their time there, they are affectionate and kind and make much of their wives'*.

Implicit here are comparisons with white working class families in the area which tend to present coloured men in a positive light. Hence the report can be read as a positive appraisal of Black men who take their family responsibilities seriously. As partners, Black men were likely to spend a larger proportion of their income on their households than white men. As fathers, they were projected as forward thinking, understanding the value of education.

Sharpe adopts a far more negative stance, rearticulating discursive constructions of white women as dislocated and peripheral. White women do not belong in the Black community, discussed by Sharpe as *'well educated and respected (black) men and women, less fortunate blacks and half caste children'*. Moreover, white women as partners and mothers undermine the status of those they are intimate with, by inviting negative attention and local hostility. What is most significant is that, Sharpe attempts to distance Black men and their children from the whiteness they are exposed to. In this process she frames whiteness as a degrading and hostile influence. I believe this is a key point and discursive legacy, in that this notion of deficit has continued to fuel professional attitudes. In drawing boundaries around the space of Blackness, fathers and children are located in *'a coloured household'*. In this way, they reside in a segregated space of closure and insurmountable difference. Distanced from the white mother by virtue of skin colour, nationality and culture, Sharpe severs emotional attachments by emphasising her alien status. She occupies a ghostlike space; she has presence but is lost.

Where Sharpe configures 'the coloured house' as a space of Blackness, she fails to consider women's role in the construction of those spaces. This would require a re-engagement with white women as a positive social and cultural resource, for kin living in a predominantly white society. What Sharpe fails to acknowledge is

the work that white mothers undertake to achieve a sense of balance for their children. White mothers' familiarity with formal and informal British cultural practices would be negotiated and lived on a daily basis. In these newly emerging spaces what she retains to take forward, what she acquires in a new context, what is useful and meaningful, could point to a reflexive process in shaping the household unit. In these spaces, neither wholly nor ever completely lacking in difference, sameness and difference are negotiated values rooted in that moment and context. Positions made more complex by intersections of gender, race and class.

Sharpe does try to address class but references to a type of white women, mean class differences are not easily sustained. Behaviour that sets these white women apart from others is their acknowledged sexual intimacy with Black men. Hence where Sharpe identifies that for a white woman to sleep with a Black man is degrading behaviour, she falls into a trap that presumes fundamental and superior forms of difference exists; *'the naivety of coloured men, who may not understand the type of white women that they are dealing with'*.

For Sharpe, the Black man is less than satisfied with his partner. What the Black husband comes to understand is Englishness in somewhat degraded terms, made worse by the squalor and poverty of urban areas. Localness gives the impression that outside of the area a different and untainted Englishness survives. This assumption is reinforced through visible resistance to mixed relationships, as populist opinion and public response validate white mothers' degraded status. The appeal for Black men is that these women do not truly represent Englishness. Sharpe draws on cultural constructions of the domestic sphere, already infused with classed and gendered constructions of women's role, to show *'that these women have lower standards of cleanliness, general attainments and ambitions for the children than he has. It is noticeable in this connection that the second marriages of coloured men are usually more satisfactory than the first'* (Sharpe 1933:44).

In suggesting that Black men find better quality women the second time around, she suggests that a superior form of Englishness exists and is within reach. Englishness is embodied within a different class of white women, a reality that can be attained through the right source. Yet immediately, a contradiction exists, as any class of white women involved in a sexual relationship with a Black man is degraded. Sharpe's account is troubled by discursive constructions of white women as low order, alongside her own experience of the middle class world. Within her immediate social and professional circle are a number of influential

Black men who were married to white wives and appear relatively well matched. Despite living in the London area and having children, these white wives do not appear in the research or provide a counter narrative. Despite their involvement in the Committee for the Welfare of Coloured Children, their voices are not heard. This group was formally established as a sub group of the League of Coloured People on the 4th January 1938, but appears to have been decommissioned due to the onset of World War II.

To explicitly address class, would introduce the idea of diversity amongst those white women in relationships with Black men. Evidence of this type of tension appears a little later in the document where she fails to attend to her own forewarning. *'...This is usually as coloured men have little chance of meeting respectable girls and so often marry girls who are or have been semi prostitutes. Thus the many respectable girls that marry coloured men suffer as they are classed with the others'*.

The pathology of Black families appears to be spatially bound household units within identifiable districts that are racialised and gendered. The colour bar is linked to Black men's segregation in the docklands, amongst women of a low class. Likewise, the half-caste problem reflects the quality of white women on offer in those spaces. Yet in a careful re-reading we can consider white women through the eyes of their Black husbands. Coloured men paid *'testimony to white wives'*. Women were seen to *'take sides with them, they include themselves in the category coloured and talk of we and they join the coloured men's societies the Universal Negro movement Association and the ELKS or any others that they can. Some of course distance themselves from the coloured people even speaking to their children as you coloured. These women are however very much in the minority. Many women also pay tribute to their husband's qualities and say that they are happy. I wouldn't change my husband for fifty white men'*

This paints a very different picture of the household unit as one working together. Coloured families claim a sense of unity and common purpose, a togetherness that is often denied or undermined by essential notions of race and difference. Yet, white wives and their Black husbands express legitimacy to their union. Paying attention to this detail suggests a space in which white women felt valued for their positive contribution. In acknowledging that wives joined the coloured men's groups, it is possible to position white women as active agents who transgressed racial and gendered boundaries for political reasons.

In the mixed family the relationship appears equitable; resources are shared amongst family members, as are household chores. There is no clear gendered division of household labour, which is commonly associated with households during this period. Black men appear thoughtful, attending to detail and responding to women as individuals, as well as mothers and partners. This suggests a far deeper emotional attachment to their wives than previously considered possible. Consequently, a careful reading might suggest a great deal of affection, love and support for white mothers. Where she writes '*Black men made much of their white wives*', Sharpe suggests that that Black men were publicly proud of their white wives, not degraded through their association. As such the notion that mixed households constitute individuals of limited choice is contested.

One Black male expresses clear concern for his wife when he mentions how his wife is '*ignored by her girlhood friends*' (Sharpe 33:44). In his comment, racial transgressions are seen to challenge belonging. Sharpe demonstrates sanctions existed through social disapproval. Women were excluded from peer groups and spaces of familiarity, including longstanding friendships. Women were ignored in the streets, or would cross over to avoid confrontation. In effect, women might pass by the same buildings but could no longer use them in the same manner. Moreover, each day feelings of discomfort and ostracism would remind women of their transgression. In this manner, at local level, a colour line was drawn and enforced in response to choice of partner. Significant outcomes were diminished social networks and a changing relationship to the locality. If Black families faced discrimination, white women felt the effects. Yet Sharpe uses this idea to question belonging to either Black and white society rather than challenge essential distinctions.

Most significantly, the dominant message is that white mothers damage prospects for coloured children. Mixed race children, identified as '*bright and intelligent*' underachieve and the source is said to lie with '*white mothers who did not value education as much as white fathers.*' A position reiterated in the Keys Annual Report 1938, where mixed race children were acknowledged as '*handicapped*' from the start. Crucially, unemployment was not a matter for labour relations, but lay in white mothers' attitudes and desirability for children to be educated. Hence educational underachievement and employability was located in white mothers' low aspirations for children and not in the discriminatory practices of employers or the wider population. I argue the notion of white mothering as inferior and deficient remains hugely influential.

Sharpe wrote that children were disadvantaged due to the lax attitude of mothers in completing scholarship forms and those who see education as a waste of time. Barriers, including a lack of sufficient resources or needing contributions to the family income, are established before identifying the specific role that colour played. White mothers were concerned with colour, but in a way that reflected their everyday lives. Conscious of racial difference, they may have felt it safer for their children to stay in the local vicinity, rather than seek employment in areas where no Black families lived. Knowledge that children would be treated differently in unfamiliar surroundings and away from the people they knew, suggests that mothers were unnerved that their children would have no form of support or police protection once out of the area.

It is subsequently acknowledged in the Keys (1938) that some mixed race children were '*ambitious*' but were dissuaded from being so due to the limited prospects available to them. In these circumstances, Sharpe claims that white mothers need to develop realistic expectations. Here we see another tension; white mothers are identified as constraining influences and barriers to their children's well-being, limiting their children through exposure to a wider world or facilitating unrealistic expectations in the aspirations they have for equality in the workplace. In this claim it is a given that discrimination exists. The prediction is an untenable position. Race is an acknowledged obstacle beyond their control or, insufficiently acknowledged to protect their children. Sharpe reads white mothers as lacking aspiration. Provocatively this reinforces the notion of a certain type of women with limited opportunities or education. Whereas I offer the potential that this is white mother's strategy to manage racism and temper disappointment.

Interracial Sex in the Second World War

Prior to the involvement of the United States in the Second World War, interracial unions throughout the period were viewed as relationships between promiscuous white women and illiterate Black men (Bland 2005). The dominant focus identified as those relationships between English girls and West African men. In the heat of war, several reports began to emerge focusing on newly arrived families and the plight of Black men whose British status was questioned.

Caradog Jones (1940)

In light of the damaging race relations exercise that Fletcher appeared to generate 'academic research' aimed to distance itself, adopting a methodologically robust approach. In the Economic Conditions of Coloured People (1940) the rumblings of Fletcher continue to be influential, but Caradog

Jones attempts to shift the contours of the debate and change the context for enquiry. The effect of this is a substantially different focus. Caradog Jones calls for an academic re-engagement with the colour problem, using a 'professional' team of social scientists from Liverpool University and including a Black researcher as a form of 'matched interviewing'. What he sets out to achieve is robust evidence in support of economic theory, as opposed to the morality of interracial sex. The material forms part of the New Merseyside Series of publications to reinforce its value. The aim was to re-examine the position of coloured families in light of depressed economic conditions and world developments.

In this material the essence of a white wife's impact on that household was purposely under acknowledged. I argue this is to the detriment of its findings but does begin to track how white mothers became invisible in coloured and later Black households despite their presence and role in the construction of those spaces. The report concentrated more directly on an explicit rejection of the idea that Black men had taken white men's jobs. Somewhat ironically, by posing this line of enquiry the question then remains, under what circumstances coloured families would be welcome. I suggest that the concept of territory leads us to return to intimate relations between Black men and white women.

I do not fully analyse this report but see it as useful in providing contextual data for the period. Survey data was collected from two hundred and twenty-five 'coloured families'. Of 214 men whose origin was known, 155 were from West Africa, 34 West Indian, and 13 were English born half-castes. Hence the focus remained on conditions for particular ethnic groups. One hundred men had been resident in the country for over twenty years and two hundred and one were married. Caradog Jones claims that *'further evidence of the long standing nature of the problem comes from the age profile of half caste children'*. What Caradog Jones intimates is a relatively stable and permanent community where only one newcomer had settled within the past five years. Using demographic data the Black community is presented as historic and aging; coloured families were smaller than their white counterparts but were likely to increase. Caradog Jones sees the need for policy to address the needs of mixed race children rather than focus on Black men. Employment discrimination against mixed race children was already known. In effect Caradog Jones locates discrimination and equality within wider considerations of nationality and citizenship.

Given the nature of the statistics, they provide strong evidence that white women were crucial to the structure and formation of the local Black community.

Moreover, they suggest something rather positive about the status of interracial unions. Black men displayed a far greater commitment to white wives than previously suggested. There was a degree of household and community stability that is often underplayed in research. When coupled with the large numbers who were married, family dynamics challenge ideas of temporary and transient households in favour of continuity and conformity. This allows us to reconsider white women as deeply connected to the community rather than peripheral to it.

Yet the onset of war marks a rupture with this form of thinking. War prompted a collapse of the nation's gendered and raced boundaries. As Bland (2005) argues many women transgressed gendered boundaries to become heads of households and surrogates in the absence of white males. Where employment was more readily available in the Services, munitions factories and chemical works, British people from the Colonies were called upon to fulfil their duty to the motherland. A sense of Britishness over shone class and racial difference in favour of solidarity against a white European enemy. English attitudes to race, both pre and post war have been explored by a number of academics to challenge the view of British liberalism. The international politics of race relations and race management point to significant tensions between the British and American governments that are outside the scope of this chapter.

Whilst the war marked an influx in immigration, the discourse on interracial sex moves tangentially to focus on relationships between English girls and African American servicemen. Perhaps this can be understood as inclusionary and exclusionary processes unable to distinguish forms of strangeness as supportive or threatening. Americans represented external strangers whereas momentarily West Africans and West Indians were British. As such the colour problem is rearticulated as a temporary social problem, geographically determined and pertaining to particular ethnic groups.

The Young Report 1944

The Young Report can be seen to tackle this problem head on and was notable in challenging the assumption that the colour problem emerged at a specific moment in time. The critique of government policy was explicit, drawing on inside information to support this position. The Young Report is approximately forty pages of text, organised and structured in an academic way and described as such by one of the committee members (Sokoloff 1986:165). Although the Colonial Office was not directly responsible for the report, they took an active interest in its content, production and distribution. In fact, the banner reads confidential; perhaps relating to the assistance provided by the Welfare

Department, particularly the confidential data they supplied on families. Young proposed that theorising newly arrived groups had overshadowed processes of continuity. The 'real social group' refocused attention on those who had longstanding connections to the area and the nation. Perhaps this is the basis for white mothers to become a significant focus of the report, pointing to the on-going possibility for change and disruption that they represent.

The actual area covered by the report, commonly referred to as docklands, amounts to less than one square mile of Stepney Saint George's Parish, including Commercial Road, Cable Street and Leman Street. Yet, immediately Stepney's shared experience with other port towns is identified. Elsewhere Rich (1995) has argued how Central Government adopted a low-key response to the on-going issues of interracial sex. However here, Young claims that a national policy approach was urgent and necessary. To some degree Young demands enforcement of gendered boundaries by proposing that it is white women who are the root of the problem. Notable chapters include, *'The Coloured Man, his health and attitude towards white women; White Women, their background, health, moral attitude and attitude to Coloured Men.'*

Young collected data from local officials, welfare worker, hospitals, hostels and doctors. Members of Toynbee Hall were responsible for visiting and reporting on the public houses, and as such there is a question surrounding the consistency of the data collected. In all *'698 coloured people could be found'* and were distinguished as 400 residents and average floating population of 298. Young focuses on the residents who comprised 252 men, 12 women and 136 children. 116 had white mothers and 78% were under the age of 5. Despite their presence, white women located outside of the local resident group simply did not count; as *'Northern girls'* they had no ties to the local community. Moreover, skin colour made them peripheral to the Black group.

The ethnic composition of coloured men was reported as 45.4% Colonials and 59.2% Indians. West African males amounted to 69.4% of the Colonial group with West Indians representing 17%. Indians were not subdivided by ethnicity nor factored in subsequent discussions. Of the total number of Black men, 75 were identified as married. The use of statistical data is interesting as it masks the actual numbers involved. Only 86 of the men were West African, with an additional 21 men being West Indian, yet this group dominates official discussions. As upwards of 60% of the Colonial group were married, it questions whether it is this status that results in the disproportionate focus of relationships between English girls and West Africans. Where Young points to a significant

increase in mixed race children under the age of 5, in some sense this undermines the notion of continuity. It rather suggests increased illegitimacy during World War II. This reaffirms the opinion that white women's agency creates a colour problem. So, the difficult living conditions experienced by Black men are explained, in part, by the way in which white women embody the nation. Consequently, the rationale for white mothers to exhibit colour preference needs to be articulated. Young develops two different strands of thought pointing to a shift in the discourse from submissive to politicised identities.

Young demonstrates white women's mistreatment by Black men, highlighting the dangers that exist outside the protection of an English marriage. Women within the relationships were considered vulnerable, risked physical attack and mental harm. Black men's beatings exposed '*native traits and behaviours*'. The report reflects stereotypical attitudes to Black men as primitive sex machines behind a gentlemanly façade, such as those put forward by Hebert Stember (1978). This representation takes on erotic connotations through claims of '*behaviour that Black men resort to when roused*'. Black men were dangerous; they were pimps and bullies (Liverpool Echo, 11th July 1919). Where Young writes that white mothers stay with their Black partners, they are framed as desperate, lacking in agency and self-esteem; white mothers did not find a place of safety, but insecurity, overt and hidden hostility and antagonistic relations. Sexual intimacy and marriage symbolised a class of women who settled for very little. Equally, women were in some sense the property of Black men, to do with as they choose. Black men occupied a position of ultimate choice, exercising rights and authority over white women. For Young (1944) there is friction in these households. White women are subordinate, by virtue of gender, elevating Black men to household heads and subordinating whiteness. In so doing, white women's submissiveness exposes the nation to a degraded status exposes

There are clear tensions here suggesting boundaries have collapsed, but it is not at all clear which. Class and race appear fused through interracial relations, yet bias in the selection of working class white mothers compounds that view. Where she describes marriage being an awkward and difficult status, this reinforces Young's perspective that white mothers were generally '*unable to make a comfortable home*'. Again this is a very class orientated critique of white mothering, as the only model of housewifery women would be familiar with. Having a Black husband did not automatically result in white wives constructing home in a non English/non white way. The inference is an innate lacking in the personal attributes associated with good housekeeping, a class infused discourse regarding gendered constructions of women's place.

Strangely, the racialised composition of the household is almost immaterial here, as it is a working class status that appears problematical. The reality of working class life in Stepney was irregular low wages and substandard accommodation. In point of fact, much of the data suggests a comparable if not better experience for mixed race children in terms of clothing, nourishment and appearance than white children with a similar socioeconomic profile. This might indicate that white mothers were proactive in setting a higher standard for their family. Arguably Young underplays material conditions, in favour of the presumed psychological pressures of racial transgressions that impact on the marriage. These include white mothers' guilt and sense of responsibility '*for their children's social handicap and future prospects.*' Young suggests moments of reflection and dissonance where individual acts are internalised. Where Young senses regret, it could be claimed that it is not women's choice of partner, or their decision to have a child, but the duplicity of Liberal English attitudes, which quickly recede in the face of racially different constructions of Englishness.

Where the author suggests white women do not think Black men are their equals, this is an external perspective that emphasises inequalities within the relationship, as opposed to wider society. Yet, women within the relationship lack authority to speak. Young then reinterprets white mothers' claims that '*Black men do in fact make good husbands*', as a screen; women are simply denied white males on account of their social position. Here the researcher reinforces that white men have little or no value for these women. For Young, where women '*self-defined*' as social outcasts, they acknowledged they had no relationship with white society including '*its rules*'. Is Young inferring that white women were already ostracised prior to their mixed union or subsequently? In this statement the colour problem in Stepney is realised. The urgency the report demands is a focus on white women who were out of control, reckless and unwilling to be rehabilitated.

Theorising white mothers as sexually deviant and breaking with social convention is a strong focus for the report and a recurrent theme across the reports. The sexualisation of white women is interesting given the idea throughout the period women got little pleasure from sex (Stember 1978). For Young, white mothers dominated Black men, encouraging them to live promiscuously through coercion, and/or manipulating them for their own ends and sexual desire. Young demonstrates this tendency by identifying how white women demonstrate female desire, engaging in casual sex and blatantly socialising with Black men. The notion of transgressive behaviour develops in claims that '*white women would*

openly consort with any black man during their husband's absence'. In this statement, a number of wider issues are drawn into a discussion about women's position in society as autonomous agents. Women's choice to have a Black partner, to engage in casual sex, to reconfigure gendered constructs within and outside of marriage, is seen to flaunt social convention. This reading of Young frames white women's actions as a political act of rebellion.

Outside the discourse of interracial sex, white women were no less political. White women were the vehicle through which Black men took up residency and developed social ties. Women actively negotiated employment and housing contracts, provided an information hub for likely places to stay, jobs, informal support and friendship networks. In several later publications, Little (1947) and Richmond (1954: 75) rearticulate similar points. The real function of local clubs and cafes was to provide a strategic meeting place for white women. Actions were pre-mediated and sexually orientated. Young based this view on her research sample, a local Black community that was overwhelmingly male in composition. Thus interaction would have to be viewed as racialised and gendered constructs. Young wrote of women's transgression of gendered boundaries as if they were racialised acts divorced from other dimensions. Young does not consider that white women socialise with Black men for company, moral support or physical protection whilst husbands were away.

To add context, I referred to the personal papers of Edith Ramsay, a lead member of the Reports Management Committee and active Stepney resident. Several cases of white wives, *'got into trouble while the men were away'*, are identified. Trouble was not foul play or illegitimacy, but dissenting neighbours and unfounded accusations of prostitution. Sokoloff is clear that these Whispering squads were quite successful. When white mothers were alone they were aligned with prostitutes and this led to the forcible removal of children from their homes despite that they were *'passionately devoted mothers'* (Sokoloff 1986:159). Here is a coming together of informal and formal means to censure interracial relationships. Supporting documents suggest the police were active in mobilising local networks against these women (Rich 1986:125). In 1943, 75% of prosecutions against café owners were cases brought against white women, suggesting that policing practices were particularly gendered. Ramsay writes that white mothers were highly vulnerable during periods of male absence and were unable to draw on the necessary support they needed to withstand hostility in the local area. To be in a mixed race marriage was to be at risk (1986:166). Yet, despite her involvement as a committee member, this perspective is missing from the report.

These additional documents bring into focus a relatively insular status for white mothers. A delicately balanced and loosely termed 'coloured community' was based on a street, a corner, a doorstep, that marked coloured households as the outer edges and fringes of border space. Local social relations erupted where racial ambivalence was no longer possible. Women were exposed to intolerance when the largest numbers of Black men were simultaneously away at sea. Danger could come in the form of racial attacks on both their person and property, through police and state intrusion. Where social convention was challenged, resident white women, those who had shared the same streets and same facilities, now made white mothers uncomfortable. White women identified white mothers as part of a coloured population they wanted nothing to do with. Therefore, despite close proximity to one another, they were distanced and could no longer access the networks once open to them. Crucially, racism operates both formally and informally and is highly visible through social spectacle or covertly maintained through interpersonal relationships. Equally, there is a strong idea here of gendered dimensions to racism (Vron Ware 1999).

The Young Report illustrates this through various claims, for example, '*coloured men and his white woman rarely go about in the streets together*'. Young writes they have '*no sense of companionship*', an emotional connection that Young deems to crucially underpin Western marriage. In this comment, the report forgoes analysis of western relationships, suggesting that they are based on mutual choice and love, moving them beyond a purely legal status. In doing so, the status of mixed marriages is discredited as lacking in depth or sophistication. A gendered analysis reduces white women in mixed marriages to 'administrative duties', fulfilling male physical need without any degree of self-satisfaction. In so doing issues of agency remain unexplored, which traps white mothers in emotionally barren relationships. Indeed, this statement may reflect a feminist analysis of women's broader position in marriage at that time, which could not conceive of new sites of possibility.

Section five of the report is devoted to an analysis of the nature of white women suggesting that a 'few of the nicer type' were actually attracted to their Black partners. In this statement, Young reduces their relationship to a sexualised discourse of physical attraction, immediately reinforced by a view that the majority of women are prostitutes and daughters of prostitutes. In this role women are politicised as they choose immoral lives as a means for an easy living. They are lazy and manipulative, lacking any serious work ethic. In this sense women's actions can be seen as political and radical. Young positions

white women as lacking in all self-respect. Without substantiating any claims Young writes that '*almost all of these women are below normal intelligence and according to officials who have dealt with them are oversexed*'. In making such a claim women's mental competency is called into question.

Where Young claims that '*local doctors say that VD, especially syphilis, is increasing*', symbolic metaphors materialise as medical conditions. Women represent a site of real contamination and contagion. Syphilis is a disease known to spread through close contact and can be passed from mother to child, yet can remain hidden from view. The idea that white mothers carry syphilis is a powerful metaphor for unseen danger in the community. Women's bodies cannot be trusted and threaten the nation. A reinterpretation of this statement perhaps indicates concern with disease and disruption, contagions that can be concealed within the female body such that all women have the capacity to produce difference. Indeed, white women who give birth to 'Black' children make this more acutely felt. On reading the report, it is clear that a campaign to criminalise white mothers who chose a non-white partner, struggles against social justice. Young shows this where the report claims that women '*do not take treatment*'. In effect they are criminalised both by their inaction to seek remedy and protection, and by virtue of the offence, interracial sex, which brought them to official attention. By claiming '*almost every one*', regardless of what she had done, any white mother brought before the courts, was considered contaminated. Indirectly, Young suggests that all women require constant surveillance.

In a concluding segment, Young attempts to address women's attitudes towards the coloured man. This is a segment that she finds difficult due the multifarious factors involved. Are women ruthless and uncaring? Black men present an economic opportunity, which extends beyond cash for sex? Or, are women physically attracted to Black men, as such seek them out for sexual pleasure? For Young class and race are interwoven in discussions about Black males. White women are said to find the Black man attractive, vital, passionate, charming and gentle, in complete contrast to white men of a similar class. But, Young finds it difficult to reconcile these claims; the report identifies instances where women are ashamed of their choice of partner. In one such example, a white mother is identified as unable to take her child to a coloured doctor despite needing treatment. What is being proposed here is the eruption of natural and deeply engrained racial attitudes towards difference. Described as the '*natural strength of feeling*' that women have about the colour line, we hear again the trope of regret. Ultimately, white mothers acknowledge the superior status of white men. Young suggests in a bizarre show of belated nationalism, women

would rather sacrifice the health of their mixed race children, than cross the colour line and access a black doctor. Childbirth is a mechanism by which women reflect on the colour line and then take remedial action. The assumption made is that white mothers will want to reinstate boundaries in previous locations.

Interpreting Young's subsequent focus on inadequate mothering practices can be seen as an attack on her legitimate claim to affect boundary maintenance. To summarise Young, mixed race children are considered neglected, inadequately cared for and more callously, a nuisance by the white mother. By contrast the Black father is considered to *'instinctively love children and do his best'*. By making such a comparison, the white mother is shown to have no maternal attachment to the child, who is more closely associated with the father. Relationships are not special as she will be intimate with anyone and the children are not special because she has no sense of loyalty or regard for their feelings. Women are shown to lack cultural authority. There are no reasonable grounds for any form of cultural transmission between a white mother and her mixed race child.

A powerful message is sent to the reader where Young uses children's voices to tell stories. The report indicates that children talked about white mothers giving coloured men diseases and openly having sex with other men in their father's absence. In these accounts white mothers are shown to be incapable of placing boundaries around appropriate behaviour, they emerge as a distinct risk to their children, unable to protect them from the dangers of sexual exploitation. The report is a damning indictment of white mothers' capacity to love and care for her children. Young identifies that mothers constitute a negative and destructive environment into which children are socialised. This incongruent and hostile space is fully realised where Young quotes the significant number of mixed race children who have been taken into care following their mother's neglect and desertion. Crucially, the children are identified as 'at risk' through the strong moral overtones that are established. Despite the fact that the home is considered a place of safety and relationships to parents are crucial for child development, the mixed race house is constructed as a chaotic zone of immoral, uncaring and sexual deviancy. This is emphasised where Young calls for *'endeavour to help the white women regain her place in society'*.

The McNeill Report - Illegitimate Children Born in Britain of English Mothers and Coloured Americans (1945)

Despite Young's appeal, official discourse points to a refocusing of attention on interracial unions between English girls and coloured Americans, as nothing more than locally specific and temporary associations. Yet, arguably it was the married status of the women that motivated investigation. Likewise, the research suggests war provoked international debate on racial difference, intolerance and belonging. Unions between English women and coloured American GIs raised pressing questions about the legal status, nationality and citizenship of those involved. It is within this context of high profile media reporting and acute government sensitivity to UK and US international race relations, that we situate this small report and survey by Jamaican, Sylvia McNeill. Hutchinson (1975) provided detailed evidence of discussions about racial politics and the role it played in deploying coloured Americans. The concerns he raised are played out in the archival correspondence I found.

In July 1945, letters were sent to all the County Welfare Organisers throughout England and Wales asking them for specific information regarding the extent of illegitimacy between English girls and coloured Americans. This was a huge task. Supplementary data was requested from organisers and individuals who had been approached to help with adoption of these children. In producing the survey a number of pressing tensions are revealed: in identifying the extent of white women's illicit relationships with coloured servicemen, white women's relationships with white servicemen were exposed, in down playing the levels of coloured illegitimacy institutional racism was exposed, lastly, international relations were challenged by a seemingly permissive British stance on interracial sex when race mixing remained illegal in a number of American States. Given press reports that illegitimacy had reached epidemic proportions, the issue required considerable sensitivity. McNeill states that despite the large number of troops stationed in the country *'it was reassuring to find the total number of births in these areas are considerably low'* (1945:4). McNeill feels *'compelled to identify with the claim that there are not nearly as many cases of illegitimacy as one had been led rather loosely to believe'* (1945:7).

In total, the report identified 536 white mothers, whose 544 children had coloured US servicemen as fathers. McNeill does not take these figures at face value and casts doubts over the validity of the report. Yet, in excavating the data, her findings sat uncomfortably alongside her desired results. A significant number of counties such as South Devon appeared to only report a single case. McNeill suggests stigma and high visibility are a rationale for the low reported numbers. With the prospect of under-reported cases she makes direct visits. McNeill may have felt that a face-to-face meeting would allay any concerns that members had

about divulging confidential information. Equally it could have been a strategy to ensure that data was kept off the record. She recounts attendance at a meeting with the South Devon County Welfare Committee and the Head of Welfare to the Ministry of Health, alongside six other associated Committee members. She explained the purpose of the survey, how the data was to be used and for what reason.

Officially this was low-key interest with low numbers. Contradictorily, South Devon convened a formal committee with Government representatives to consider how to respond. During the course of the meeting, McNeill is asked for advice and direction regarding how to deal with white women's illegitimacy. Various ideas are put forward including: a dedicated children's home; sending the children to the US to be with their fathers; the advisability or otherwise of women marrying coloured soldiers if they subsequently left. To some degree American Anti-miscegenation Law thwarted these plans by blocking women from going to the US. I believe each strategy was designed with increasing distance in mind, to deflect the source of the transgression from the outcome, by concealment or relocation. Indeed, this focus echoed Crosby's comments, interracial unions were oozing ever more deeply into the country's heartlands and away from ports as initial entry places. The outcome of the meeting was a far greater concern than initially expressed. Immediately following the meeting a further 45 cases were handed over to McNeill. Although this huge under-representation 1:45 validates McNeill's decision to go, it is then very difficult to understand why she makes no adjustment to the data or offer an explanatory framework. The McNeill Survey set out to establish the number of illegitimate 'mixed race' children. The problem is in understanding what was or was not included. This calls for an analysis of the politics behind the report's production that is outside the scope of this chapter.

I refocus on the data produced in the report. Devon is acknowledged as having 18 married mothers and 12 unmarried mothers, with a further 53 women of unknown status. McNeill does not discuss how these 83 women relate to the data previously mentioned. Importantly, despite that the research focus was on illegitimacy in the greatest number of cases, 352, Returning Officers were unsure whether a woman was married or not. This indicates the vast majority of white mothers did not directly participate in data collection or have a relationship with the agencies involved. Significantly there is no gender data for 314 children, nor the ethnicity of fathers. It is just as plausible that Black men from the Colonies, or mainland Britain were fathers to some of those children.

Arguably government were being driven by populist opinion and claims that 'the morale of British troops was likely to be upset by rumours that their wives and daughters are being debauched by American coloured troops' (Hutchinson 1975:123). Further dilemmas arise as McNeill tries to distinguish unmarried from married white wives, presumably to white British servicemen. 95 unmarried women and 89 married women were identified as having had sexual relations with Black men whilst their husbands or fathers were away fighting for their country. In supporting material the married group posed the greatest challenge. McNeill writes that correspondence appeared to come '*chiefly from married woman... when the adulterous actions were committed*'. Despite the researcher's awareness that marital status distorted the research, in as much as women who were not permitted to marry by the American government, none of these issues are addressed.

I believe the problem of illegitimacy, was the high visibility of sexual transgressions across racial lines where partners that are not be as easily hidden as those between white partners. Whiteness remains intact and infidelity could be hushed up and smoothed over. This is made clear when recommendations made by McNeill included the possibility of reconciliation, if arrangements could be made for the removal of unwanted (coloured) children. Ekarte also claims that many husbands took women *back if they got rid of the baby* (Sherwood 1994:53). Hence strategies to support white women were mostly considered as those that took their children away. I would question whose interest is being served here. In responding to the Survey, The League of Coloured People categorised 135 pressing urgent cases that demanded immediate attention. The largest group was identified as mothers needing to place their children in to care.

Moody, President of the LCP, argued against this not in terms of child welfare, but as a visible slur on the nation. '*If they are put together in one large home, in one place then too much will be known about them, and they will be considered a public disgrace and difficulties will arise*'. He appears to support broader policies of dispersal, as a form of concealment. For Moody, '*the taint of illegitimacy is added to the disadvantage of being mixed race*'. These issues combined in particular social problem a '*half coloured child*'. These proposals reappeared as an article in The Worlds Children, dated March 1946. What circulated, as being in the best interests of that child was the notion of dislocation, blurring origins to '*mitigate the psychological shock attendant upon their origin and their lack of maternal affection*'. This statement reinforces in the reader's mind that white mothers do not cherish or value their children. This represents yet another scathing attack on white mothering, when in reality white mothers had little

choice. Most importantly, as Moody has both a white wife and mixed race children, the only plausible rationale he can have to support these theories is to be seduced by the class discourse underpinning this debate.

In a letter dated December 12th 1945, Moody writes to Aneurin Bevan, the then Minister of Health, with a copy of the Survey. What Moody presents is evidence of a '*problem that is not insolvable*' but one that needs the urgent attention of both UK governments and US. Moody locates children within a wider concept of 'war casualties': using the notion that they are victims who suffer on account of particular circumstances. Moody calls for effective action to avoid future problems, which he believes, would '*aggravate the expression of a Colour Bar in this country*'. To some degree Moody is suggesting that the blurring of boundaries is problematical and that retaining sharp edges enables a degree of mobility. In his response dated January 24th 1946, Bevan concludes that children should be placed in existing children's homes, and argues there is no evidence to suggest that mixed children are currently refused access. This is contrary to rhetoric that coloured children were not received into children's homes as staff felt they would be difficult to place. Bevan then reports the legalities of repatriating children were under careful consideration and that the preferred individual mothers to keep and bring up their children. This indicates an inconsistent response to this issue.

By the time of the LCP Presidential Address in February 1947, the report had been published and widely disseminated. Hence, regardless of quantity or quality, the issue was considered '*a grave problem*' and that '*if left unattended may lead to serious and untoward results*'. Moody claimed that upwards of 750 cases of illegitimate coloured children were now active on the LCP's books. By the 16th Annual General Meeting of the LCP, amidst further confusion over the exact numbers involved, the Children's Welfare Section pointed to the difficulties that impacted on data collection, suggesting an on-going attempt to quantify the scale of the issues (see BL/025NWLT194707). A number of problems related to methodology. The report did not consider future trajectories yet the Returning Officer for Somerset reported that 39 cases had occurred since September 1944 alone. Women who accessed support did so through a number of different agencies including county welfare, public assistance, religious and voluntary agencies for support. Again, the Returning Officer for Somerset claimed women who were involved with Moral Welfare Workers would have constituted a significant number but were missing from the data, which again undermined validity.

A second set of methodological issues relate to difficulties in establishing baseline data. One interpretation is that white mothers contest the status of mixed race, or the location of mixed race children as a social problem. As the narratives indicate (see chapter 5 & 6) mixed race is not a label white mothers choose to use. Certainly, this was not a category in the early Census. It is unclear how women in interwar and post war Britain would have defined their children's ethnic status. Certainly, the early research of Wilson (1987) and Benson (1981) suggest brown was commonly used as a label. Significantly, white mothers were not all social services claimants seeking welfare aid and so did not appear in the data set. The report was forced to acknowledge that some women were financially able to look after their children, they did not want, or need assistance. Women's agency challenged conceptions of interracial illegitimacy on the grounds of class.

A number of women successfully evaded inclusion in this stigmatised category. Effective concealment strategies depended on resource. Likewise, concealment would be subject to personal, economic and emotional considerations. I interpret 'hiding' as a reaction to social pressure, yet at the time this was positioned as an attempt to 'conceal their act'. It is highly improbable that white mothers would be able to conceal a 'black child' to the degree inferred by 'hiding babies in attics', particularly as racism and illegitimacy were acknowledged impediments to accessing housing. It does suggest white mothers were sufficiently fearful to feel the need to go into hiding. Therefore to be hidden was a strategy to avoid state intrusion and a necessary strategy to keep their children. The lack of women's voices points to some success from these strategies.

The problem in establishing the precise numbers involved was white mothers' ability to effectively evade public attention and just manage. Women do appear in the Keys 1948 Newsletter: 'the mothers often make a temporary adjustment and it is only when this adjustment breaks down and the women have to seek the aid of a social agency that the case comes to public attention'. What this indicates is that women who tried to keep their babies were successful in the short term but that sudden change or gradual deterioration of circumstance forced them to seek assistance. This change could have been difficulties with employers, housing, or financial obstacles that left women with limited options. Accessing social agencies was not just an expression of need, but it exposed women to a wider public. Women with no need of support would not become public property.

Engaging with social agencies did appear to undermine women's authority by placing them in a public arena that was overtly hostile to race mixing. Women encouraged to place their children in the care of voluntary organisations did so as a desperate measure; a last resort. The reality was that organisations were loathed to help, due to the colour bar and full knowledge of the difficulties in placing these children in adoptive or foster homes. A number refused outright to take the children. When mothers self-identified as needing help, they were then excluded on racial grounds. Women were brought into a public arena where explicit debates about belonging occurred, and then told that no one wanted their children. In this act their whiteness was both accentuated as the problem and the security that identity conveys denied.

In an article appearing in *Mother and Child Magazine* 1947, the report was discussed at length (BL/025WLT194709). There is some expression of sensitivity – the author claimed that women experienced a mental health breakdown –resulting from practical difficulties in finding accommodation rather than the affect of racial difference. Arrangements should be temporary as *'parental love is such that only a very few of the women appear willing to part with their children'* (Mother & Child 1947:17). Indeed, I continue to argue it is external barriers that make white mothering difficult. It is unclear the basis for those concerns, are they degraded whiteness, Englishness and/or white masculinities. The article suggests that white mothers did need strategies to avoid press intrusion, particularly as they *'feared publicity about the time of the delivery of the child'*. This suggests something of a media frenzy tracking white mothers about to give birth whilst they tried to move areas in order to avoid becoming part of a national press campaign. Therefore, breakdown could be reinterpreted in a number of ways. As a public act of severance, there is no longer any duty of care, denoting a breakdown in relationships between the state and its Citizens. Glimpsed in these documents, are stories of women who effectively managed being a white mother and did not want to be identified as immoral, culpable or incompetent. Unlike mothers with illegitimate white children, having a mixed race child suggests that colour was problematical, not financial constraints.

When the LCP reported at length on the welfare of coloured children in the October/December 1948 newsletter, media stories were rife with sensational numbers of 10,000 children left by coloured troops. Partisan interests emerged as a significant side story, where Black-led organisations vied for control over 'the solution'. International allegiances were formed that mobilised Black groups in the UK and the US, to raise consciousness and money for dedicated children's

homes. The research undertaken by Sherwood (1994) identifies the role that the African Churches Mission and Pastor Ekarte played in support of this claim. The Keys suggests that 172 American couples were willing to take children if there were no financial implications. Ekarte of the African Churches Mission developed a plan for 'black women in America to adopt the children' (King (1938). In a discussion about Pastor Ekarte, Wilson (1992: 71) sheds further light on this idea. The LCP were instrumental in petitioning for funding, under the War Charities Act 1940, to gain financial support for a dedicated children's home.

A repatriation policy magnified and managed racial difference by invoking the sense of a colour line. Children were alienated from their rightful place of belonging, and dislocated from their cultural roots. However, the assumption that mixed children should be placed in established Black communities, regardless of cultural difference, appeared to some to be an appropriate response. As a consequence, the drive to repatriate children to the US appears to have some logic. A number of political factors were brought to bear through this action, which draws attention to a relationship between nationality and birthplace. Interracial unions complicate nationality by favouring a visible location over birthplace. Where Englishness is assumed to be whiteness, mixed children who are visibly different are excluded. The assumption was that *'the child will do better if allowed to grow up among its own people'*. This point is reiterated throughout the report *'where fathers were anxious to take their child'* (Sharpe 1933:17). What this suggests is that the child physically belongs elsewhere and symbolically the white mother has no claim or rights. What appeared both urgent and necessary was to voluntarily repatriate or forcibly remove children from their white mothers *'as a basis for her resettlement in normal relationships'* (Sharpe 1937:144).

Yet, the fact that the children were not US citizens meant their claim for US citizenship was inauthentic. The Home Office appeared well aware of difficulties in establishing the legal status of the children. In a Memo from the Home Office Children's Department (see MH102/2331) doubts were expressed as to whether US immigration laws would support visas for coloured children, excepting those supported by the affidavits of relatives. The Advisory Council on Child Care met on the 6th July 1949 to discuss the Emigration of the Coloured Child. At a meeting at the Home Office to discuss the report, the Home Secretary expressed concern about appalling discrimination in the US, such that sending children would be disastrous. In his own constituency of South Shields a claim for segregated schools had just been rejected. A position he assumed symbolised racial solidarity amongst British people. Yet white women who kept their children

pushed the boundaries of Englishness in directions it did not want to take. Women who wrote to the LCP for support and advice suggested they were racially aware and already conscious that they were part of a New England.

Whilst the idea of American coloured servicemen dominated the discussion, there was limited reference to white American servicemen. The Keys also begins to mention an increase in the number of children born of West Indian Servicemen. During 1947 – 1948, numbers asking for help from this group increased from 5 to 30. Requests for help did include adoption, but equally tried to facilitate white mothers emigrating to be with their repatriated partners, or to ask for demobilisation in Britain so they could be together as a family (Keys: 110). Again the report acknowledges that a number of white mothers tried to keep their children, but state obstacles prevented this from happening (Keys: 112).

Post War Interest

Broader social shifts post 1945 reflected post war Reconstruction. A more radical and revolutionary Black politics was making its way into the headlines. As influential figures, such as Kenyatta and Nkrumah, called for Decolonisation, Black interests reflected a pan Africanism and a move towards independence and Nationhood. Simultaneously in the drive for solidarity, consensus-building politics lead to a coalition government in the Home Countries. The Welfare State saw a growth in state intervention through the various institutions it developed to take the Nation forward. Gendered constructions of women's role increasingly acceded to change, as married women shifted from wifedom to motherhood and a growing number of agencies cared for the welfare of the child. So, shifting allegiances marks the period and temporary interests, that dependent on the context, collapsed and magnified difference.

As the end of the decade drew close, the Empire Windrush brought a new influx of peoples from the Caribbean to the UK. Where West Africans had dominated discussions of interracial sex, West Indians became the latest groups singled out for attention. At the same time there was a shift in the discourse away from a strictly working class focus. West African students and middle and upper class white women were entering into relationships (Green 1998). They are mentioned as respectable guests at student unions and hostels, they are interested attendees at literary circles, or work in the administrative regions and institutions of the British Colonies. Some came under scrutiny within the records of the passport office and MI5. The Government's attempts to block the marriage of Ruth and Seretse Khama show the extreme political and legal measures taken

to challenge individual rights. Their marriage prompted the Harrigan Inquiry of 1944 and an international scandal. In her research Tabili (2005) writes that official discourse is commonly authored by men such that 'woman' is framed by operating a particular gendered lens. What I believe is significant from my research, is that in many of the archival sources I consulted, women played a central role in the research process and interpretation. I argue that this can be used as further grounds to support the notion of a collective voice.

Report on the Conditions of Colonial People in Stepney (1949-1950) PROCO876/247

The Bamuta Report appears to take us full circle and back to Stepney. In 1949 the warden of his accommodation approached Bamuta to undertake some research in his spare time. Henrique's appears influential in the report's production and dissemination; he is directly referenced in accompanying correspondence between the Home Office, the Colonial office and the Private Secretary at 10 Downing Street, but the letter he penned is missing. In a letter from the Home Office dated January 1950, J. J. Nunn writes to Cass stating that *'he [Henrique's] can be assured the police will continue to make every effort to improve the situation'* (PRO CO17136/50). In this segment an unofficial dialogue between Henrique's and the Home Office is acknowledged such that the Home Office commit to make the police aware of the contents of the report. References to drug taking and prostitution become the means to mobilise legitimate surveillance of the local area.

Bamuta provided officials with a unique opportunity to undertake unofficial research. As a Black man Bamuta was considered able to infiltrate the local community by visiting local cafes and striking up acquaintances. As a student of Bristol University, the report would reflect a degree of professionalism. Using employment connections at the Bethnal Green Family Welfare Association and via Toynbee Hall, he had direct contacts in the area. Although small, the document was widely circulated to the varied departments dealing with Colonial peoples, voluntary organisations, local authorities including the police, as well as influential individuals including Creech Jones, the Ministry of Labour, the Assistance Board and the Colonial Office and Downing Street. The challenges an investigation of this nature raised were questions of citizenship and belonging. Those who were British subjects had legitimate claims, albeit in law, to be here, but questionable attachments.

A considerable focus in the main body of the report is the documentation of the nature of women who would enter into relationships with Black men. Bamuta begins to distinguish the local population by resident or floating status. The group, termed part of a floating population, constitutes seamen in between jobs and those who move between urban centres as a means of sustenance (Little 1947, Tabili 1994). These males are immediately located in opposition to the spatially bound local community. Male groups are classified according to Indian, West Indian, or African origin. White women appear alongside this segment within a separate section. Clearly Bamuta does not mean to discuss all white women in the area, yet his need to identify white mothers as a distinct group somehow connected to Coloured Colonials, points to a number of tensions. There is a particular difficulty locating white women in relationships with Black men, in relation to the collective.

Where Bamuta writes *'they are usually of very little intelligence, some are illiterate by no means unintelligent, they will push them on to do the most amazing things for the sake of gain'*. Women are visibly part of the white group, but in Bamuta's report they equally represent something different. This difference to whiteness is expressed as background, intention and lifestyle. Women who choose to live off, or with, a coloured man, represent a form of difference that moves beyond skin colour. In his study Bamuta makes sense of this type of white woman by identifying her as someone who does not belong. This is verbalised through the term *'floating lot'*. These white women are anonymous people in anonymous places lacking social bonds and purpose; they are valueless.

Increasingly, transience demonstrates non-belonging, and this language brands all white woman in sexual relationships with Black partners prostitutes. A degraded status sets white mothers apart from the dominant group. By adopting this perspective relationships are considered sites of empty, meaningless, temporary and functional places of sexual exchange. As such white women with Black partners are identified as having a different relationship to the locality and the collective. The union they form acts to sever links to existing networks. It is by considering the discourse of belonging that we can understand why white women with Black partners come to form a substantive narrative in the overall report. What they represent is a gateway to belonging, but for those who have been identified as illiterate, uneducated, degraded and different.

There is limited contextual or demographic data available, to the degree that residents appear untouched by many of the economic and social welfare

considerations associated with the area. Despite limited opportunities, working class women who were visibly independent or resourceful may have already crossed symbolic gendered boundaries. Those women who found new opportunities in these areas, establishing gambling and drinking houses, brothels and basement dance clubs were identified by Bamuta as exploitative of Black men. Industries operated by women with no scruples, operated outside any legal and moral framework so greater surveillance and intervention was needed. Yet, these are trades often associated with seafaring communities, not strictly the outcome of the racial composition of the area or the gender of the proprietor.

The trope of the predatory white female leads Bamuta to suggest that Black men need to exercise caution when choosing a white woman. The predator indicates a woman exercising independent choice, but she is a subversive character pushing the boundaries in her own interests. Represented in this way white mothers are framed as aggressive, persistent and determined to mobilise against the common good. In Bamuta's extended commentary, *'women invite themselves for drinks...if the man has a room of his own and takes the woman back with him he is as good as married...she will stick to him like a limpet and once you get them they will not leave until they have taken all you have and no amount of beating will get rid of them'*, there appears a ready supply of willing partners. Bamuta develops the idea of women's dominance, suggesting that Black men were initially unfamiliar with the lifestyle and services on offer in the ports and that white women initiated much improper behaviour. The women were said to encourage Black men into criminal behaviour and black marketing as a means to generate money, *'they will instruct them to make money in all sorts of shady ways.'*

Equally, Bamuta writes that white women were easy to find but difficult to get rid of, labelling them *'limpets'*. Women's status was identified as so desperate that they stayed even when severely beaten by Black men. Bamuta writes this indicates Black men's true strength of feeling against these women *'whose contempt and frustration spilled out against the women they were forced to consort with'*. Implicit in this idea is that associations are born of necessity not choice, particularly where Black men have no respect for these women and treat them accordingly. Bamuta writes that generally *'Black men tire of them quickly'*. Interestingly, these white women are now subordinate to their Black 'lovers' rather than manipulative of them. What this points to is diversity amongst the population that makes categorisation difficult (Brah 1996). Perhaps it indicates that some Black men were looking for casual sex, whereas some white women were looking for longer term relationships. Not all white women in the docklands

were working girls but living there may have sent mixed messages to outsiders. It is noticeable that contradictory accounts of white women exist; women either up and leave or refuse to go. In both scenarios white women who slept with Black men were deemed untrustworthy.

Arguably, officials would interpret such mistrust as women's isolation from either Black or white communities. Bamuta provides grounds for mistrust in a subsequent discussion about the colour bar. Bamuta observes a white woman dismiss a Black male whilst under surveillance by local white males. She is later seen to parade arm in arm with him. Bamuta sees this as an act of duplicity, a disloyalty to Black men and collusion with the dominant group. He ostracizes white women for their dishonesty and lack of principle without considering how they may be protecting both themselves and Black men from physical violence. A reinterpretation situates white women as peacekeepers, actively negotiating and defusing potential tensions between Black and white men in the local areas. Women strategically vary degrees of familiarity and emotional investment in relation to changing circumstance. Yet Bamuta does not connect the colour bar to discourse of non-belonging.

Domicile provides a strong impetus for local tensions to erupt as white wives afford a means and a reason for Black men to stay. However, as a locality study, the report does not consider local attitudes, or compare employment and housing conditions across mixed race households and the white community. Bamuta favours his focus on individuals and social habits, discussing drinking, drug taking, leisure and relationships. Bamuta suggests the relative absence or fragmented nature of an established Black community, but points to the beginnings of one. A striking line provides some insight into wider social anxieties with immigration and race mixing that perhaps identifies the researcher's own bias and his collusion with Colonialism. Where Bamuta discusses the light skin tone of many Jamaicans he sees they provide an opportunity to '*obviate the half caste problem, half castes can mix with ease, mix within this group and the question of being of one colour or the other does not arise*'. Hence, Bamuta acknowledges that mixed race children are a problem for Black and white society and the source of the problem has been identified as white women's transgressive behaviour.

In Blackness is a solution. In this case, the difference that mixed race people visibly express through skin colour is both to whiteness and Blackness. His recommendation, that people of mixed race could be hidden within a West Indian community, is justified by assuming that West Indians are already a non-pure

group. This allows Bamuta to hold onto the integrity of African identities. Crucially, the difference that mixed race people represent is parental deviation from normative group practices, cultural values and behaviours of a particular ethnic group. As such, the Jamaican group is seen to provide for African and English sexual and racial transgressions to be hidden from view.

For Bamuta, Caribbeaness represents a marginal space of Blackness that mixed race children can be placed into. This does not concede the possibility that West Indian families may not accommodate mixed race children as part of their community on cultural, national or class lines. Not least to locate mixed race children within any ethnic group deemed Black, risks discrediting any genuine sense of belonging by suggesting that visible attachments are more significant than kinship ties and birth right. In making this claim he symbolically removes children from their mother, an act that he feels is in the best interests of the child and one that could be legitimately supported in official circles. White mothers are disenfranchised as parents, with no authority to make decisions about the welfare of their children.

A significant oversight is that Bamuta fails to engage with knowledge that the largest numbers of half-castes were in fact of English and African origin. Or maybe this is exactly what he sees in his solution. It is important to consider why, as an African man, Bamuta would not consider it important to acknowledge African ethnicity. Perhaps this reflects Bamuta's own feelings about racial purity inflected with ideas about return, birthplace and class. To Bamuta, these children are not African neither English. Coloured people represent a new space where mixed populations find a certain respite and sense of safety, a middle ground mirroring that developed in South Africa. African and English remain essentially undisturbed categories. The role that white mothers play in the making and marking of Black Britishness remains unarticulated, suggesting that discrete spaces exist.

The problem remains more fundamental in terms of positioning English women who have given birth to mixed race children. Boundaries are ill defined and hazy, indistinct and ever changing. The pivotal issue that white mothers present to the nation is their visible whiteness. What they produce is visible Blackness and what they do is collapse symbolic boundaries between groups by crossing intimate frontiers. It is this position that so powerfully connects themes emerging within archival sources, with theory and women's accounts. As boundary markers white women are ambiguous symbols that construct a form of difference that is at once disruptive and challenging. This alone makes them a potential

threat and source of anxiety. Fixing their identity becomes problematical when they appear similar but harbour strangeness, a difference that can erupt at any time and lies dormant within. Hence to consider white women as degraded and deviant allows for them to be distanced from the group and subsumed within a category already termed social outcasts. Practices of distancing may account for the constant association of white women with prostitution in his document.

Bamuta provides a glimpse into the marginal spaces that he suggests white women occupy within the Black community where he claims that '*if their woman were given the chance to live normally and welcomed in the club perhaps they also might belong*'. This comment indicates a number of points, not least that white women were trying to survive in spite of difficult circumstances and wider social attitudes. Bamuta raises the question is possible for white women to be part of a Black community? Importantly, the Black society these women encountered was fragmented on geographical, tribal, religious, ethnic, occupational and language grounds. More importantly it was highly gendered and class based. Consequently, women may not be welcomed for a number of reasons, particularly tribal affiliations and gendered roles. In his account of Black networks, Manley (1955) writes that friends of Black men often found it difficult to accept white women where they stood in for the dominant and overtly hostile host community. White women's position in the Liverpool Negro associations was considered unstable; they were not to be trusted. The primary basis for this claim appears to be differing opinions between settled immigrants and newly arrived Black men. Although relationships were '*very harmonious*', there is the suggestion that settled Black men are not comfortable around white women (Manley 1955).

Bamuta suggests that women carry the necessary symbols that '*set a standard that the men would follow*'. When he does this he elevates their position to one of respect and choice. A re-reading does suggest that white mothers had the means to connect with either group if they so choose. Likewise, they had skills to negotiate the distances between them in such a way that they were magnified or collapsed. White women were strategic in the associations they made and the networks they choose to develop. Most significantly, white women were able to discern the value of attachments, social systems and modes of organisations that different groups offered. What was significant to the research enquiry, become increasingly evident in the write up. Bamuta is telling the reader the primary reasons for Black men's residency were the rights that were achieved. It is the reasons for coming, the conditions that made staying desirable and possible, and impact in the Colonies should they be forced to leave that was the subject of

enquiry. Suggesting they have limited, if any, legal rights, challenges individual rights to citizenship and includes the right to marriage. It is understandable why Bamuta chooses to undermine marriage between English women and West African males. He selects a number of grounds to achieve this. Firstly, by representing Black men as illiterate and unskilled inhabitants, secondly, by challenging the legal status of the marriage suggesting they are informal and irregular practices.

The condition of coloured people in Stepney is in no short part, determined by white women's relationships with Black men. Despite the initial research goals, the report focuses on the character of white women who would have sexual relationships with Black men. Bamuta appears to equate interracial sexual intimacy with criminal acts. This perspective constantly shapes his discussions of the white women he speaks about. He is surprised where he writes of a '*decent girl*', a white woman who lived with and kept house for a West African. Where Bamuta writes that '*I suggested that as she was working why not leave him and look after herself*', he suggests that the relationship is of limited value. Earlier prejudices seep into his research and he is unable to conceive of other factors for the relationship such as love or compatibility. He can only make sense of attachment and choice by making her an exemplary case. He states, '*she had such a standard amongst the others...they seemed to look up to her as a lady of the society*'.

The Arnold Survey 1955 (MH55/1534) Public Records Office

By the 1950s a 'colour problem' had taken on a new configuration, reflecting the increase in interaction occurring between state agencies and people from minority groups. A short report by a Mr. Arnold, Welfare Officer in the London area was put before the London Moral Welfare Workers group in March 1955. Arnold had undertaken a small survey to elaborate on the problems that West Indian and West African subjects were creating for caseworkers. In contrast to prior surveys, which conveyed some attempt to investigate the conditions under which coloured people lived, Arnold's work clearly marks a transition. Colour is constituent of the problem. The bases for the report's findings were interviews with six outdoors workers, three Matrons of Mother and Baby homes and three officers in his department. The report was submitted to the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child, who in turn used it to forward to the Ministry of Health with a request for further funding.

In the Boroughs of Poplar and Stepney Arnold writes that '*the coloured problem was no longer a major one*'. Between 1949 and 1955 there was a marked

decline in the numbers of Black Seamen, particularly West African, coming into these areas. As both areas had longstanding connections with seafaring communities this observation may reflect legal changes to citizenship rights and the restrictions placed on British Seamen to disembark (Carr 1992, Tabili 1994). Arnold stresses that within these areas unmarried coloured mothers were extremely rare but that *'co-habitation with white girls is not, however, so rare'*. The problem of illegitimate coloured children is firmly located in the sexual behaviour of white women. Local demographic data may reveal that these white women were in fact members of families identified in earlier reports as forming something of a foreign enclave. Where restrictions had been effective in reducing the numbers of Black men coming into the country, the *'black community'* matured into a small and relatively insular aggregation of mixed race households. Coloured women in these areas may represent the offspring of a number of these families.

In St. Pancras, where no identifiable coloured quarter was seen to exist, Arnold suggests that white women as cohabitees frequently tenanted property owned by West Africans. In this context the terms *'frequently'* and *'white women'* suggests a process of rapid change and turnover. Anonymous white women stayed as tenants in substandard accommodation until such time as they were replaced or moved on. Having a child, to all intents and purposes, would restrict women's movement to these small racialised zones. It is the Black man's property that she resides in, a place that denotes ownership, a space of difference and Blackness. This is in contrast to the idea that they jointly set up home together. In Paddington, *'the problem was identified as a different one'*. What Arnold discusses is a growth in the area of 19 coloured unmarried mothers who have been admitted to mother and baby homes, but again the greater number of unmarried women was 27 white mothers with Black children. It is interesting to note grammatically that they are not white mothers of Black children, a point that would emphasise a biological and emotional connection to their child. The report identifies that a new colour problem had emerged, alongside West Indian immigration, which reflected distinct ethnic dispersal and settlement patterns. In this way the demise of the colour problem in Stepney represented effective restrictions and diminishing numbers of unions between West African and English girls. The growth of the colour problem in Paddington marks increasing relationships and cohabitation between West Indians and English girls.

Mothers of coloured children accounted for 20% of casework in Hampstead. White girls had made fifteen applications for support, accounting for 60% of all cases, in the past 6 months alone. Arnold identified that the position in

Hampstead was '*very involved*' due to the varied ethnicity of the males, West Africans, West Indians, Cypriots and Spaniards were included under the banner of '*putative fathers*'. Within this comment we see clear attempts to untangle the problem according to paternal ethnicity. Hence, white mothers' relationships with some others were considered more problematical (Arnold: 111). It is interesting that Hampstead fathers were identified as predominantly students. Hampstead introduces class difference as a dimension of the colour problem, but one that is ultimately not addressed. Previously, white women had been seen to sleep with uneducated and low skilled Black men. In Hampstead white women were sexually intimate with more educated and influential Black men, radicalised in Black politics, a number waiting to take up positions of authority in their home country.

White women are themselves are not disaggregated by class, yet historical records suggest that during the period white women who liaised with students, often did so following formal requests and invitations to talks at student's accommodations. With a form of colour bar in operation, interracial meetings were often manufactured as opposed to spontaneous events. White women who would enter relationships with Black men represented as much diversity as the wider population, but were consistently described as of low class. The notion that students would be returning home once qualified may have been an added concern for welfare workers, if white mothers were to be left unsupported and alone. Imagining aloneness is symbolic of having no place in any community. White mothers paid a price for transgressive behaviour. The prevailing view may have been that men never intended to take the relationships seriously. The new tension was that Black men would use white women and then leave behind their unwanted children. Here the earlier concern that men would come and not go is turned on its head.

In as far as all the relationships are considered in negative terms, the comments suggest strong feelings of isolation and detachment. White women are alone in their rooms, representing the small world that they inhabit and limited support they have. Unlike prior research that painted white women as transient and unattached, they are now more akin to victims left stranded in racialised zones away from the support that they need. What is not taken on board is that a number of women had made an active choice not only to have an intimate relationship with a Black man, but also to have his baby out of wedlock. White women could be seen to want to keep their babies and were prepared to do so despite ostracism by the wider community.

It is difficult to understand where concern was directed and this provides for something of a contradiction. In correspondence from a Mr. R A Elliott to a Dr. Taylor, which accompanied the report Elliot writes, *'If the Colonial Office cannot help about the arrival of unmarried pregnant women, the Home Office will certainly be faced with the problem of dealing with their offspring and those of white girls who have coloured children'*. This suggests a sense of urgency to avoid taking the issue to a higher level and involving ever more sophisticated stages of state apparatus and legal frameworks that would have national implications. Elliott goes on to report that the Home Office's current policy is to board out those for whom homes could be found. In doing so Elliott makes explicit that placing *'these children is impossible or very difficult'* and that a *'time will come when the majority of children in institutions will be those who are coloured'*. *'Impossible'* suggests that insurmountable differences between groups exist and that coloured children have an intolerable future in this country, destined to be loveless and homeless in state institutions. White mother's irresponsible behaviour in creating this situation and general incompetence is reinforced. The inability of white mothers to care for their child pathologises mixed race children as victims. It also provides the impetus for action to be taken to quell their increasing numbers on moral grounds. Arnold (1955) surmises these cases amount to one tenth of the caseload of all mother and baby homes in general.

In a subsequent paragraph a number of points are stressed.

'Where it is a case of a white girl co-habiting with a coloured man she has got so completely spoiled with him doing everything for her that she is unwilling to do anything for herself'.

In this example, white girlfriends are considered spoilt and lazy. Arnold goes on to suggest they are difficult to rehabilitate, possibly due to the level of interest they would demand from a partner. He suggests that white women are exploiting Black men and acknowledges little evidence that Black men exploit these girls. Girls are considered to have made active choices about having a Black partner. Later, the status of the white women within the relationship is turned on its head. Arnold writes that those girls who return to the Black fathers of their children find that the men are only interested in the child, not the mother and will only financially support the child.

It is interesting to consider the notion of exploitation more fully. The potential threat of white girls' sexual exploitation is ever present, particularly where Arnold

cites the sentencing of a West African for '*this offence*', although he fails to articulate what the offence is. Exploitation by the '*average landladies*' was a more explicit concern and '*a grave risk*' indicating serious effect. Reading average to mean a commonplace response to 'such a mother', the unmarried white mother of a mixed race child faced considerable racism in order to secure a home for her and her baby and most importantly surmounting practical issues to be able to keep her baby. Arnold suggests that she would not be distinguished from coloured mothers in similar situations, so mother and baby homes may have been a last resort. Whiteness no longer acts as a form of protection or privilege, and normative behaviours can no longer be taken for granted. For Arnold the outcome of such racism would be to force these women back into the hands of Black men who owned rooms. The implicit idea is that these women would be sexually exploited in those spaces, once more undermining the quality of white women's relationships with Black men.

The moral welfare workers were initially concerned with the additional resource demands that immigrant unmarried mothers would make against the state, particularly in view of projected male absence. Yet, there is no mention of the numbers of white unmarried mothers with white children who were facing similar economic pressures. How can we understand a strategy that is knowingly underpinned by flawed data? The arrival of unmarried Black women was the target of Elliott's words, when quite clearly the data showed those mothers to be white. Despite knowing that this is not the root of the problem, the potential that further numbers of immigrants will be forthcoming, raises alarm bells of immoral behaviour.

In a document accompanying the report, Miss Lavallin Puxley, Chairman of the Management Committee, writes that '*Work for West Indian immigrants increases*'. Referenced in her writing is an on-going dialogue between the NCUMC and the Colonial Office, in which Puxley notes that limited funds were available for supporting work of this nature. In point of fact the Colonial Office was actively seeking alternate solutions. Puxley writes the Colonial Office was anxious to send children to grandparents or other relatives in Jamaica. Ultimately this suggests that children should return to a country of origin, a place where family networks and social support would take on the financial and social responsibility for their upkeep and citizenship would be established. Advancing this strategy firmly locates the child within the Black community and creates social and physical distance between them and their white mother.

Conclusion

To understand the tendency to focus on interracial sex between particular ethnic groups requires further comparative analysis that is beyond the scope of this chapter. A caveat needs to be made. Historians suggest that it was customary practice for academic researchers to variably term Cypriot, Maltese, Somali, Adenese, Chinese, Indian, West Indian and West African, amongst others, as 'coloured'. Notwithstanding the very real difficulties that classification creates, in the reports that I consulted, ethnicity was often explicit. Secondly, despite the scope of the report to use the demographic data comparatively, relationships between white women and West African, and later West Indian males, often became the sole focus for the discussions that followed. Consequently, the discourse of 'interracial sex' seems to make explicit claims about particular intersections of gender, class and ethnicity, played out in spatially determined zones.

Archival sources point to complex sexual histories, closely intertwined with stories about the nation. What they suggest are imaginings about whom and what the nation should be. White women, who transgressed sexual and racial borders, threatened the nation in two ways. Firstly, women who reproduced the nation, but in this case gave birth to English children by Colonial men, challenged internal membership criteria. Likewise, interracial sexual intimacy made national boundaries penetrable. How did the nation respond? Some strong themes have emerged across the reports. Whiteness has become a source of tension, where white mothers continue to represent symbolic metaphors for the nation, yet have used their bodies in ways that mark difference as a physical presence. Women's gendered role, as a site of cultural authority and transmission, has been contested as inauthentic where they seek to pass on cultural recipes to their children. The half-caste issues were critical in positioning white women and making them peripheral to the family that they were a part of. White professionals found a way to approach the question of race difference; a role through which they could legitimately discuss the social welfare needs of 'black' children.

The fact that interracial relationships were consensual exposed longstanding theories of vulnerability and sexual exploitation as inadequate explanations of white women's behaviour. Without anti-miscegenation laws, public officials were caught in a difficult position. The moral integrity of the collective was

compromised through the actions of individual citizens exercising free choice, and reaction to mixed raced relationships appears ubiquitous in its disapproval. There are no stories in the archive to celebrate mixedness. Where there is evidence of emotional intimacy between couples, this would suggest that connections are sustainable across groups. Positioning white women in marginal spaces draws attention to the inclusionary and exclusionary processes of nation building. It exposes how the nation interacts with gender, class and ethnic identities at its boundaries. If we consider white women to be boundary markers and makers, theoretically they are located at the point at which the nation is most vulnerable.

Inconsistencies in official response illustrate how gender and the nation coalesce within the imagined realm of racial crossing, such that social taboos and law become blurred. White women wishing to accompany their husbands 'home', points to this very tension. In a number of cases women were allowed to leave England, only to be declined entry on arrival, displacing responsibility onto Colonial governments for enforcement. Children were physically removed from traumatised white mothers who were then left isolated and vulnerable at the ports, and could do no more than return home and appeal to the British Government for help. These state sanctioned distancing strategies amount to a coercive and forced separation of families along colour lines (Tabili 2005). What the archives point to is how official engagement with interracial sex was often complex, shifting and reflecting subjective interests.

It was important to identify borders rather than presume they existed. I draw on Fanon, who claims that it is through the defence of national culture that we find evidence of its existence, and every culture is first and foremost national. I interpret this to mean that a nation will emerge as distinctive, drawing on historical formations, political regime and social practices. I used archival sources to interpret official discourse and public actions as acts of border defence and maintenance. Perhaps this is why World War I and World War II – periods of mass immigration – provide access points to such a rich source of archival material on the subject of white mothers. Likewise, I constructed an anti-miscegenation discourse against white women's emotional intimacy with Black men. I argue that it is emotional intimacy that is more threatening to the nation's boundaries, as it suggests deep-rooted connectedness can be sustained across borders. In this sense, borders will be seen to have collapsed whereas sexual impropriety can sometimes be hidden or tolerated, masking such serious boundary process.

On the basis of archival analysis threats to the colour line were of global interest and discussed on a world platform, such that nationality initially appears less important than securing a privileged position for whiteness. Interracial sex was of significant concern to the United States, South Africa and the United Kingdom – who arguably positioned them as more tolerant than either of its two partners. England assumed moral authority over the US by objectifying the facts of racial segregation; a system of social stratification based on the legacy of slavery, and within South African apartheid. Outwardly, English colonial officials stressed an ambiguous position with regard to racial mixing and racial boundaries. Inwardly, there was mounting national anxiety with race mixing, the spread of contagious diseases and development of sexually immoral acts. This underpinned on-going and systematic inquiry into the nature and extent of interracial intimacy. There was a considerable thirst for information; I argue there was a lack of clear motivation to do anything with it.

The United Kingdom had not enacted anti-miscegenation legislation along the lines of South Africa and America, where mixed marriages remained illegal in many states until 1967. Initially British official discourse centred on legislation against the uncontrolled and improper behaviours of colonial officers who sought sexual and tender ties with local women whilst posted overseas (Callaway 1987). The needs of white male masculinities were positioned alongside wider questions of immorality in discussions about the status of *'illegitimate native children'*. Eventually Empire came home and with increasing numbers of seamen, servicemen and students making extended visits to the United Kingdom, there remained no clear policy in place to deal with mounting public anxiety at the visibly increasing numbers of interracial relationships. Maintaining political representations of Britain as a liberal and tolerant nation appears to have shaped official action and underscores covert research practices and official lines of enquiry that remained under developed. Arguably, the reason I sensed such a strong feeling of revisiting and repetition, despite clear patterns of enquiry, was research lacking direction and more suited to intrigue and voyeurism as opposed to intellectual engagement.

The documents I review in Chapter 4 begin to track national thinking in the Inter War period, illustrating the sub text of social and political commentary and its concern with the citizenship rights that white mothers might confer to mixed children born in the United Kingdom. I argue a there was strong link forged between the growth in interracial sex with a perceived colour problem. The potential for a visibly different homespace and national identity was very real and threatening. What was at stake and where should lines should be drawn? As

Anthias (2006) concludes, Britain battles with opening its arms and extending invitations but closing its doors and securing its boundaries. There was no evidence to suggest that mixed race children were at any time considered or debated as forming part of the collective. They were positioned in a space of Blackness not yet defined. Political and public momentum focused on halting the trend as opposed to de-sensitising public criticism of interracial relationships.

There is considerable archival evidence to suggest that despite significant engagement with these issues the British Government were reluctant to implement policy. I argue the result of such indecision was a blurring of the boundaries of belonging, between tolerated and intolerable, accepted common values and fictive belongings. White mothers' actions demonstrated that women's role in boundary construction was a potential source of weakness. I have argued that, much like Helen of Troy, white mothers, as insiders, were implicated for their role in infiltration. Consequently, forceful acts were warranted to re-establish a colour line by accentuating the incompatibility of mixed race relationships. A strong theme to emerge was just how intensely interracial relationships were viewed as a damaging threat to social order. Where attraction was considered unnatural, relationships were likened to lewd and criminal behaviour, to dangerous and suspicious acts and to illicit sexual liaisons (Fisher 2002). It was important to identify this anti- miscegenation discourse, as the notion of social disapproval needs a context from which to operate and point from which to make sense of public sentiment, national yearnings and racist acts.

Arguably the potent combination of sex, race and place prompted an inward turn, yet marked an onward association with colonial histories (Callaway 1987). 'Foreign colonies' and a growth in 'coloured quarters', despite the small numbers involved, drew significant attention. Areas earmarked for detailed introspection, were portrayed as vice ridden and immoral, effectively cut off spatially and socially segregated from the normality of mainland towns. In summary, the materials I found in archival institutions pointed to loose white women who ran wild in vice ridden areas, seeking out fun or profit, but quickly became trapped in a downward spiral of degradation. Unstable and unacceptable behaviours blurred the division between 'us' and 'them' confounding the assurance of birth right as belonging. Place was inextricably embroiled in degrading whiteness by flagging up potential border entry points and actors that could cross over. What is striking across the documents I reviewed in Chapter 4 is the relationship between ethnicity and class. I sense that nationality is used as a means to distance whiteness from sordid, sexual and exploitative relationships between degraded white women and gullible Black men. Englishness is positioned as a

particular form of whiteness that is exclusive. Local residents responding to this representation verbalised discontent, campaigning and petitioning government officials to take action against those who bring disorder. This rhetoric is as much about how class articulates belonging as ethnic difference. It is through this dialogue, a local and national commentary, that the workings of borders are revealed.

In archival holdings evidence of direct public involvement is commonplace. Letters between individuals seeking help to rehabilitate daughters from Blackness appealed for action and made it through to the doors of Downing Street. The initiation of formal inquiries and police investigation, and the reaction and commitment of officials to take remedial action are all documented. It is an interesting observation that research appeared in self-contained areas such as the docklands where 'other' was already located at the outer edges of physical landmass. As Newman (2006:143) claims this particular boundary genre, where borders are discussed as politico-territorial configurations. Defending local borders began by contrasting 'newcomers' with well-established families who demonstrated deep rooted connections to place. This was particularly so in the Young Report 1944. Those not born in the area and later those without formal registration documents, were identified as transient and temporary populations termed outsiders (Jenkins 1985, 1998, Little 1947). Outsiders attracted unwanted attention to the locality, often the cause of increased police activity and local tensions. As the status of working class areas became racialised, the forensic gaze intensified. I argue that interracial sex was considered a strong factor in deteriorating local social relations.

In the early documents I sourced, most certainly the Fletcher, Young and Bamuta Reports, white women who had intimate relationships with Black men were most commonly identified through terminology used to describe economic opportunists or temporary status. Women in relationships with Black men were labelled prostitutes where no other reason for intimacy appeared to exist. The context in which mixed relationships were variously 'ousted' or tolerated, perhaps reflects how relationships between English girls and foreign seamen were framed as superficial and time limited due to prior belongings and departures. Women were presumed to aspire to normality and conform to tradition should they be able to find a respectable partner. This supports the notion of whiteness as a situational, negotiable and fluid identity subject to varying constraints (Ferber 1998). In the case of interracial intimacy a more rigid borderline has been crossed, leading to the notion of transgression. This degree of permissiveness cannot be sustained and the impulse to fix identity (whiteness) and constrain mobility quickly re-

establishes itself. In the reports, which I selected, this is evident through language used to denote belonging. The Young Report for example, distinguishes the population of white women in Stepney as local girls and white mothers as 'Northern Girls', arguably to denote a less sophisticated version of Englishness and externalise belonging. In this process is an acknowledgement of women's legitimacy to belong, alongside collective uncertainty about women's relationship to the nation.

It was perhaps difficult to comprehend English as so lacking to warrant such extreme acts of deviancy. This is particularly true where women symbolise the nation but then occupy a space outside it. I sense it is the notion of permanency that is most challenging to boundaries, which are then forced to respond. The Fletcher Report in 1930 was the first I identified that explicitly placed white women in coloured households, marking a shift in thinking and move towards relocating white mothers permanently outside the nation's boundaries. My close study of the Bamuta Report identifies women in such degraded terms to move white mothers into a space of non-belonging, beyond white or black collectives. I acknowledge the considerable interest and scrutiny exhibited in establishing the characteristics of Black men and children described as half caste, half coloured and Anglo Colonial and later coloured, yet would argue the clear emphasis in all the reports was theorising white mothers' sexual deviancy and break with social convention. This comes through most strongly in the Young Report that forcefully demonstrated that the notion of newcomer was a misnomer. The root of the local colour problem was more easily identified by local groups, resulting from those with pre-existing attachments to the nation. I interpret this as a clear message to government from local communities that radical action is required to address white women's sexually deviant behaviour, including brazen acts of flaunting sexual desire and blatantly socialising with Black men. What Young wants to address is a shift in gender relations, intimating a need to refocus collective attention on internal border threats and the negotiation of interior spaces, as opposed to bolstering borders against outsiders.

I looked for ways in which belonging was constructed through official materials. To be born in England, of English parents, initially secured a social identity for Englishmen and Englishwomen that was relatively unquestioned and is often dormant in the writing. When shaken up, it emerges as a nationalist element that appeals to common sense and rational thinking which is mythically white (Ferber 1998). Racial hybridity was positioned as a measurable negative affect of race crossing including the increased likelihood of genetic disease, indicating a deep rooted and pervasive Eugenicist influence. Where origins are tied to birthplace

and lineage to English women, mixed race children complicate and contest national belongings where they demonstrate continuity and discontinuity. I borrow McClintock's (1995) notion of originary powers to claim that primordial and cultural origins remained strongly intertwined with an imagined national identity and nation building. This centralises women's biological reproduction of the nation and conforms to the view of women's natural role as '*bearers of the collective*' (Bauer 2000:26).

Running through all of the reports that I selected, both in the official discourse and the research officials commissioned, is concern for the unnatural outcomes of race mixing. It was the notion that belonging was scientifically proven, but relied on a flawed source open to contamination that was so challenging. The mythical assumption of sameness and difference located in a fixed relationship to the nation, that was identifiable and controllable, destined and predetermined identities for all. The battle is to restrict movement of unstable elements from devaluing the core and this creates inconsistencies. I draw on Balibar's (1991:96) notion of fictive ethnicity, representations of a pre-existing and natural community, with origins, culture and interests that transcend individuals and is immanent in its people. This gives nation a mythical potency of destiny but a nebulous shape to accommodate change over time, a contour that gives rise to shifting borderlines but also spaces of radical activity. The reality of white mothers points to the conjoined nature of attachments and boundaries with no clear form.

Although the racialisation of an English ethnicity was never made explicit, the most commonly appropriated signifier of difference was that which was visible and created an immediate sense of disconnection and strangeness between those considered white and non-white. The appeal of 'science' is to suggest natural belongings and common sense – it can be seen – and this comes through strongly in the archival sources where attachments that are valued are safeguarded, and those that are considered valueless degraded. In the narratives, white mothers identified and resisted these signifiers showing a malleable quality and meanings that became layered and indeterminate. Contingency marks out the social construction of ethnicity as institutional acts and archival sources point to the official workings of the state as increasingly government institutions, legislation and public bodies mobilised to secure rights for English citizens by qualifying membership, by labelling and externalising other. The evidence suggests this information was sourced by an assessment of standards, behaviours and attitudes; aspirations, education and economics; and through the use of public spaces and resources. Far from a single act of

birthright, Englishness was a commitment that was continuously regulated and reinforced over a life span.

With a focus on genealogy and origin as a major organising principle, the forms of Englishness I uncovered in the archives, were closely intertwined with common history and future destiny. Genealogy conjures in the imagination a mythical union, a shared project of place, language and culture by virtue of birth right, lineage and blood ties. Bonds of affection, social ties, mutual support and kinship were constructed through an appeal to family, tradition and place with historical roots. Women with Black partners articulated belonging on these same terms. A veneer of Englishness often gave way to a rich socio-political history where other was closely intertwined. Whilst the official position appears to discriminate against any form of racial impurity that might discredit whiteness, its foundations were very shaky. The women's narratives point to these same connections and disconnections. Two of the interviewees presenting as English had non English grandparents but were visibly white.

In the writings of Balibar (2006:4), strangers are those that demonstrate belonging to other spaces, by prior citizenship, adoption or descent and those institutions merely reflect this position. In as much it is the workings of the border that produces the stranger as a particular social type, as more or less strange. In this case the archive mapped belonging through a number of cues. Excluding visible difference could be seen as the most offensive strategy, in the sense that this was a boundary that was aggressively crafted rather than defended. A primary function of border maintenance is to discriminate those with authentic claims to belong from those who make disingenuous claims. Visible difference appeals as a categorical, or as Alba (2005) writes, a bright and unambiguous boundary line. Blurred boundaries could in fact just be more sophisticated borders, less easily navigated as they remain complex and difficult to disentangle and re-mark zones as inside or outside dependent on an individual's approach. It is not that boundaries are more or less mutable rather the complexity attached to crossings causes significant and differential effect. The spotlight falls brightly on transgressive behaviour, where having a foot in both camps is not possible and furthermore remains blocked to the offspring of mixed unions.

Where the term Negro was commonly used in the early reports that I examined, I argue this not only demonstrates a pervasive US influence but a desire to make clear demarcations between Black and white by deploying a specific notion of Blackness to great effect. In the light of discussions regarding interracial intimacy, these imaginings of white femininity and Black masculinity were a

potent source of public outcry and moral panic. There is also evidence of a corresponding shift away from the notion of nations and ethnicities to adopt binary Black/white dichotomies. In fact, in the personal stories I collected, women talked of a blanket of Blackness which suppressed individual identification and presumed commonality amongst all Black men, a position that they actively resisted. In the documents I referred to, ethnicity was often highly differentiated as either, Indian, West Indian or West African and in most cases more refined to denote, Maltese, Yemeni, Cypriot, Sierra Leone, or Muslim allowing for distinct historical data to be analysed. As a subsidiary point, despite that the greatest numbers of interracial relationships were between Indian males and English females, most commonly it was relationships with West African and later increasingly Caribbean males that demanded close and intense scrutiny. This would seem to suggest official interest in particular racial and gendered hierarchies. It must be assumed Anglo-African encounters were considered the most threatening mode of border infringement.

Introduction to the Findings

In Chapter 4, I scrutinised the nation through the stories it told about itself for itself. I drew on the work of cultural theorists as a framework for selecting archival materials (Velody 1998, Osborne 1999, Steedman 1998) and used those to construct a British 'top down' discourse on anti-miscegenation in the absence of formal legislation (Bland 2005). I believe this work illustrates an on going tension, a yearning for Englishness that is hierarchical and nationalist, negotiated through a politics that can demonstrate liberal and tolerant attitudes. In the circumstances, what and who counted as 'other' remained ambiguously defined. Yuval Davis & Stoetzler (2002:329) claim, '*women both embody and cross collectivity boundaries and territorial borders*'. Not only do 'paradoxical relations' emphasise different ways of seeing the same thing, but they highlight contingency by drawing attention to the particular lens through which they can come to be known.

My concern has been to examine the relationship between white mothering and structures of governance. I explored official documents archived in public institutions to draw out aspects of governance that control women and later immigration (Tabili 2008: 123). I began this process, dusting off any idea that archives were merely storage facilities (Featherstone 2006). Archives are constructed to facilitate a particular story being told. I wanted to disturb that story by revealing what was considered natural and evident was in fact constructed and manipulated. I sketched out a set of preferred boundaries, identifying the contours official debates constructed around an imaginary nation. I found myself tracing the interior spaces it claimed and defended, the exterior limit lines that surrounded it and boundary zones in unmarked spaces. The implications of using this approach draw attention to collective mechanisms and processes that infer marginality.

Based on the official material I selected for analysis, sexual foundations were identified as important in boundary placement and construction of 'other' (Donovan 2005). I demonstrate this by showing discursive constructions of white women as degraded, subversive, and detached group members, centred on the fact of interracial intimacies. Moving away from textual based analysis to narrative accounts reveals inconsistencies, contradictions, and border dilemmas amidst a complex interlocking discourse of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. I contend that where women both construct and constitute 'other' positionality cannot be taken for granted. White mothers' relationship to the

nation needs further exploration to unify seemingly disparate dimensions of identity and to claim or discard belongings.

During the period of my investigation, interracial relationships between white English women and black African or Caribbean men, albeit by consensual means, crossed a colour line in ways that suggested national emergency and boundary collapse (May & Cohen 1974, Rowe 2000, Bland 2005). Racial transgression was a catalyst that pushed British racial attitudes to the fore and erupted into public violence and disorder across ports and working class neighbourhoods (May & Cohen 1974, Jenkinson 1986). Beyond the early 20th century, border dilemmas continued throughout the pre and post war periods into the notorious Nottinghill riots of the fifties and thereafter. Battles waged over 'white territories' including access to white females. White mothers were ghostlike in these debates, refraining from making a direct contribution that might flesh out boundary occupation and the bordering process in more sophisticated ways. Arguably, silence has distorted the possibilities to conceive of mixed relationships through more balanced terms of reference.

There has been a complete disregard on relationships of upper and middle class white mothers beyond exemplary cases. Those that found a voice, such as Nancy Cunard, captured the national imagination but were not considered representative of wider women's voices due to their privileged class location. Concern with women's role in the formation and structuring of society played out through patriarchy. Fisher (2002) reasons this social system was a fundamental as class and daily lived out through the intertwining of household governance, a political rule ad property rights. Shoring up boundaries and marking out limit lines, reconciled a need to police and protect 'English women'. This extended to the refusal of exit visas for white women wanting to join African partners in case they 'went native' or suffered with the heat. Conversely, women were blocked from disembarking at African ports where there was fear of social reprisal (Tabili 2005). The point is that what interracial unions mean is not merely a matter of personal reflection but deeply affects collectives. Certainly political administration and governance is important here. It would be short sighted to assume that British attitudes were immune to external influence. Notwithstanding Colonial landscapes (Collins 1952, Glass 1967, Rich 1990) toxic racial structures and stringent anti miscegenation Laws where in operation in South Africa and the United States. White mothering was positioned as the antithesis to an idealised and imagined nation, citizenship and traditional gender values.

Given that position, I contend that white mothering has wide political implications beyond localised conditions of race mixing and individual experience. My experience of being a white mother resonates with contributors, who felt strongly that tensions and difficulties inscribed on the relationship did not accord with their experience. In examining a relationship between Colonialism and sexuality, Levine (2208:124) states how meanings are '*swamped by the views and opinions of those charged with protecting British boundaries*'. I embed white mothers within this commentary, claiming it part of a battle to expose white mothers as strangers dislocated from shared values. I include a far broader definition of gatekeepers than Levine, extending the remit of moral authority downwards to community activists. In my view, it is the mass mobilisation of the racial imaginary that eroticizes or simplifies interracial relationships. In this schema, a loving relationship between a British woman and African/Caribbean male is reduced to illicit sexual acts. This process denigrates emotional connectedness to a state of impossibility.

Arguably, distinct colonial histories and being of first or second-generation migration may affect relationships in ways that have not been analysed. Historical accounts certainly focused attention on new migrants from West Africa and the Caribbean as developing Black British communities. Narrative accounts point to a shared British experience and histories that cement present and future relationships. In fact, difference was not always as different as might be anticipated, reflecting an overwhelming degree of normality. In my view, by overly focusing on collective acts of separation, dominant constructions have tended to disregard 'invisible ties' (Stoler 2008). Certainly these enduring connections ensure a legitimate place for women as members of the collective.

The following three chapters begin to emphasise complexities and contingencies that problematize the notion of 'transgression' as a single exit strategy. However, in the first chapter, I take up the premise that white mothers occupy a marginal space at outer boundaries marking the limit lines. By imposing an 'outsider' gaze, many of the archival themes including vulnerability, abandonment and dislocation are evident within the narratives. I then consider the type of boundary work that marginal locations support. In the second chapter, I reposition white mothers at interior posts, guarding frontiers in the collective interest alongside other group members. By positioning white mothers as insiders they are seen to revision the nations borders to reflect new interests. In chapter 3, I relocate white mothers to a place of possibility in the borderlands. Here they occupy a fundamental role in the co-construction of transformational zones rather than spaces of inbetweenness.

Chapter 5: Marginal Identities, Scrutiny, Surveillance & Strangeness

In this first of two chapters of findings, I begin to link historical with contemporary accounts by following key themes identified through archival research into narratives of everyday experience. I focus on three particular dimensions that were pervasive within archival materials to develop the idea of a dislocated and peripheral location: the sexualisation of white mothers, claims of maternal incompetence and a chaotic home space. I then revisit the framework I developed in the methodology to consider border activity as a call to arms. I include here public spectacle, policing and surveillance. I propose the collective severs relationships, to cast out members considered degraded and spoiled identities, in what I term 'acts of separation'. I make suggestions as to how that occurs and is experienced as racism. I then consider marginality as a process by which familiarity becomes strangely unrecognisable. I close by asking which identity white mothers inhabit in those spaces. As Bauman (1997) contends through his research, is it possible to pass through spaces without being touched by them.

Contextual Continuity

The final archival materials I analysed were the McNeil Survey (1954) and Arnold Survey (1955). By this time, Brenda was giving birth to the first of four mixed race children in South East London. Brenda had already been threatened with the sack by her employers for marrying a black man, and given that the time was one of racial discrimination, it was unsurprising that she struggled to find rental accommodation for her and her growing family. Damp, cramped rooms with the worst rental conditions were all that was available. Having struggled to secure accommodation, Brenda now resorts to a direct approach to negotiate employment, better wages and working conditions, alongside improved housing options, believing she will secure a more favourable outcome than her black husband will. As she describes, often the only accommodation available was 'coloured men's homes', where small rooms within a more substantial building were offered to mixed couples. As 'coloured quarters' grew in size, Brenda sensed increasing vulnerability amidst growing white anxiety. Within this heated socio political climate of rising hostility, immigration challenged the racial composition of local areas. It is equally possible that gendered relationships were unsettled, a process that challenged the social construction of whiteness, making it visible in those areas.

Relocation to the Borders: the Sexualisation of White mothers

Using selected materials I began by identifying discursive patterns that pathologise white mothering as an immoral act. There was a prescriptive approach to typifying qualities and characteristics of white mothers, reflecting a working class bias that conflated mixed race outcomes with class-based inequalities. White and black collectives read white mothers as lacking and manipulative in a number of dimensions. Justification included the notion that white women exploited black males for financial gain, an act that suggested a lack of moral and sexual boundaries. Moreover, black collectives criticised white females for needlessly increasing black male vulnerability, making them targets for local vigilantes. Culpability emerged as a strong theme supporting the notion of irresponsible acts. When coupled with the idea that women were of low intelligence and lacking in aspiration, they were easily discarded as symbolising limited collective worth.

I would argue that a cursory glance at the biographies in appendix A, challenges assumed homogeneity, pointing to a high proportion of educated middle class women in interracial unions. Nonetheless, archival sources position any working class white woman with a black male companion as the lowest form of prostitute, trading sex for money or attention. In circumstances where prostitution did not accord with white mothers' social class, mental instability was a common referent to infer an unstable, barren and loveless relationship with limited commitment. By contrast, the narratives demonstrate almost half (14) of the women had been legally married with 11 relationships continuing for over a decade. For 9 women their first sexual relationship was with their child's father and 7 remain together. Almost half of the women (13) remained in a permanent relationship with their child's father. As I discuss elsewhere, permanent relations, marriage and parenting, present a significant political challenge in ways that temporary and fleeting relationships do not appear to.

Where interracial relationships were positioned as a positive affair, these were side lined as the ramblings of ashamed and embarrassed participants who regretted what they had done (Fletcher 1930:21). Likewise, covert reports produced for government offices evidenced an understated and everyday approach to 'difference'; a position subsequently highlighted to ostracize white mothering as maternally incompetent due to their lack of racial awareness. In spite of such ordinariness, the concept of fetishness (McClintock 1995) and social disapproval (Harman 2009) gained momentum where they remained unchallenged. Voyeuristic consumption of mixedness continues in contemporary accounts. A good number of my contributors were subject to direct public

approach. Impromptu interactions aimed to unpack the explicit and intimate nature of interracial relationships. This was an affront to Lynda's status. As a homeowner, employed, with a graduate husband she married over a decade ago, she cannot understand why she is misread. The identity she inhabits is emblematic of a middle class, married, suburban mother.

'There is just this assumption you know, that I'm a certain type of women, you know, one black man any black man. I mean I was going to the car park and you know I had the kids with me, and this [black] man, you know, starting chatting me up and said how about us getting together ...you know, I mean who does that. I mean what do they think that I'll you know jump into bed with anyone at the drop of a hat, I must say like hair and I know that is a really bizarre thing but one of the things I have never done and one thing I have sworn that I will never do is straighten my hair and then scrape it back and tie it in a pony tail I'm sorry I'm just not doing it I know so many white girls do that and I look at them and think you're taking on all the traits and all the looks of a chav' (Lynda 40s)

Lynda distances herself from social stereotypes, pointing to interconnections of gender, race and sexuality when describing women who associate with Black men. Acting from a position of class privilege she contests the identity as being able to say anything about her, but does not dismiss it as having meaning. A collision of class and gender is evident here, where boundaries around whiteness are unsettled. This points to layering and complexity that single signification systems simply cannot address. In shifting contexts, white mothers are marked inconsistently in terms of whiteness and class, but consistently 'ousted' as 'other' when overlain with racial difference in the form of a partner or child. To what degree there is a potential to influence that reading is unclear.

Equally, women such as Lucy who appears happily married and goal focused may not accept an assigned label if there is a portfolio of options to choose from.

'I try not to let bother me you know Michael says that people are racist and we have to protect the children but I don't think about it all the time we are just a family and like its more about what other people think

What do you think they are thinking?

That I've slept with a black man (laughter)

What does that mean?

To them it means what's going on, how we are in the house, the sorts of things we do, that we don't do much, or have friends, or we're not nice people, but we work as a team and we have achieved a lot I never believed we would get this far we bought this a year ago and Michael has done all of it himself well with a lot of help from me ' (Lucy 20s)

Drawing on professional networks as a meeting space, Gill challenges the notion of sexually driven relationships to re-establish the case for normality. Relationships develop between two health professionals, sharing similar interests and a common work place.

'Definitely the media has got a lot to answer for. There is such a lot of negative stereotyping and stories about white women as if there is only one type, and that we get together with any black man and make for troubled difficult children. She is always unintelligent and has no career prospects, children from lots of different fathers, low self esteem the whole works and I don't know anyone like that we are just completely normal you know we meet our partners through work and are attracted to individual people. Colour only becomes a problem afterwards (Gill 30's)

As a single mother, Ashlie was anxious about how her small daughter might be perceived by teachers at the local school, and was concerned that she would not be treated fairly because of her status. Although it would seem that anxiety took root as early as pregnancy.

'Seeing as I had her young, I am not working, I am on benefits and I really think they look at me and think definitely, it is horrible it really irritates me because there is this massive assumption that anyone in a mixed relationship is doomed for failure, I mean we have got lots of friends erm, friends with children, none of which are ahh, one is actually black and white and they are still together, but I did notice when we went out in a group or even if I was with other mothers, I used to be the one that got asked are you with the father, always and I would say well yes I am. Yes, I am, It was almost a well done you, like I got a badge. I do notice it, my elder sister made a comment once that she didn't think Eugene was a typical black man and I immediately said to her what do you mean, where did that come from because she has grown up here all her life and I thought coming from our family, we are a very open family and I have never heard anyone in my family say anything like that before, and I was quite horrified actually, I myself know lots of black people that are, but I did know in a way what she was trying to

say, and I was very shocked at that.....I just hope that the teachers will be nice to her, a couple of times when I have picked her up they look at me and I know what they think of me

and what is that?

that I've had sex with a black man that I'm no good (Ashlie 20's)..... I made a point of preparing myself for that while I was pregnant actually

how did you do that?

I spoke to my mum quite a lot about it actually as I was very worried especially towards the end my sisters had had children by this time and all their children were all pink and fair children and I knew obviously that was not what my baby was going to look like I was worried when you are pregnant you worry about lots and lots of strange things and I was worried that I would not be able to attach myself immediately and this child was not going to be very fair and I was so I prepared myself for a dark baby and in actual fact she was very pale she just had dark waves on her head and that shocked me when I saw her obviously she got darker' (Ashlie 20's)

For a very small number of women, objectification was overwhelming and stifled any positive thoughts. Carys is a young mum with limited experience of stability with highly fractured family relationships and little in the way of resources. Carys discussed a series of relationships with men of differing ethnicities leading up to her pregnancy. She openly discussed being nervous and uncertain of the ethnic status of her baby until she was born. She had repeatedly prayed that the baby would be born white. In response to her position she says:

'They come up to you when you are out, these old ladies, they chat away and get all ready to say something nice, but they get a shock when they look in the pram and see a black baby, then they say ohhhhhh are you still with the father? do you know who the father is? are you married? you being such a lovely girl, you should be ashamed of yourself and that. I get the feeling that a lot of people want to ask actually they look at her, look at me, even at the swimming pool yeah, I was asked are you looking after her and being quite young as well I do notice people looking more than asking I imagine in my head that they are thinking I wonder if that child is hers, how come, you know it is not strikingly obvious that she has a black father as well but I always feel that when people know, you know see her, they make an assumption that I am a single mother,

even though I am, and it is made worse when you have a mixed kid, they think you must be a bit dim if you were attracted to a black man'they do it to me all the time, the amount of times I have to turn around and say have you got a problem, I must say since she's been born my attitude has gone from very placid to very aggressive. I won't stand for any name calling it's not right to have that thrust in your face people just don't respect you once you've been with a black man, (Carys 20's)

It is unclear which transgression has primacy of place. As a young single parent with a mixed race child, Carys conforms to a particular social stereotype. She is read by the collective using a complex and under-articulated construction of belonging, the basis for which is ambiguously defined. When placed under scrutiny, layering reveals class tensions, illegitimacy and sexual immorality, but complexities are eclipsed by the common sense simplicity of visible difference. Carys is ostracised as disloyal through a form of public spectacle, which contributes to her sense of isolation and positioning as an outsider. I suggest Carys only accommodates this until she discovers she is considered culpable and will not get the support she anticipates. What Carys called for, was the policing of all young male behaviour but this does not happen.

Veronica talks about how visible difference is used to highlight isolation but is sufficiently confident to challenge any confrontation.

'I have four children and they are all completely different it's a constant source of irritation what a cheek, asking me, I remember standing outside the school it was P's first day you know you are really anxious about how it is all going to pan out, I had one in the buggy and one running around the playground and this woman had the cheek to ask me if they had different fathers coz they looked different. I knew what she was saying and I was boiling up. I looked in her buggy and said why have yours' (Veronica 50's)

However, Heather embraces the sexualised referents inscribed on white mothers. Now in her 60s, she deploys sexualised behaviour in explicit terms. As a 'sex tourist', she makes frequent trips to the Caribbean and has multiple sexual partners. Heather's narrative remembers her time as a young mother, married with a son, who divorces and becomes involved with a Nigerian; he leaves her when her daughter is born. She then marries and has three children with her white husband. Her three daughters from that marriage all have Black partners and mixed race children. Heather is immersed in a world of mixedness, surrounded by mixed race grandchildren and black fathers. Stember (1978)

claims that where the constraints of Englishness are loosened, white women perform sexualised behaviours with Black men that would otherwise degrade their status. Jamaica was a space where Heather performed whiteness in ways that were meaningful to her. In fact, what was different was her behaviour in that space, and not the Black men that she had sex with. Heather acknowledged this was a strong possibility as when back in England her behaviour changed.

'I love it there, everyone knows me, I feel confident, I saw this man at the beach, he was really handsome, and I was comfortable going up to talk to him, I wouldn't do that here, by my age you're dumped on the scrap heap, you don't feel desirable there's nothing for you, but there I feel full of life' (Heather 60s)

The interaction of gender and place liberated and constrained who Heather could be. Heather cast off a stultified identity, inscribed Jamaica with a range of meanings that she considered to be positive and drew on those to bring her to life. Collectives view her sexualised behaviour with moral indignation revisiting earlier discourses of reckless and licentious behaviour. Acting as a tourist Heather wants to 'get it all in' whilst she still can. I question the notion of racial transgression having legitimacy here. White mothers do, after all, remain white and English. Heather uses her Englishness to position herself as a woman of independent means, and applies gendered constructions of Englishness to make demands against that space. The border dilemma she creates is a desire for gendered relations to play out along traditional English lines.

'how can I say well for example when I'm with someone there and we are at the bar and they are waiting for me to get a drink and I say oh no that's not the way it goes if you were my husband (read Englishman) he would be up at the bar getting that for me' (Heather 60s)

Heather's use of the term husband, assumes shared cultural constructions and gender relations operate, yet she inscribed 'relationship' with practices and commitments that may be misplaced. Heather fails to acknowledge that her relationships, which are temporary and casual, are potentially the source of difference she experiences. Heather presumes the Englishness she performs will be read as feminine, respected and credible, whereas young Black men may read her whiteness as a site of vulnerability and source of income.

Lynda would be horrified at the thought of being categorised on account of having a Black partner. Lynda stresses individuality, dismissing systems of

signification that present an array of unstable identities as being able to say anything about her.

'I am Lynda, Lynda, not a white catholic woman with a black husband and two mixed race children and I am not interested in anyone approaching me and thinking that they are going to be friends with me just because they are mixed and think we have something in common the only thing I have in common is that I have slept with a black man so what just because we have Black partners that doesn't mean we have anything in common ' (Lynda 40s)

Relocation to the Borders: the discourse of maternal incompetence

Cultural theorists have shaped the thesis in terms of providing an interpretive framework for archival materials (Osborne 1999, Featherstone 2006, Scott 2006). I continue to develop this link to explore the notion of heritage as a process which influences identity and belongings by ascribing importance and value to collectives (Littler 2005). A strong critique of white mothering is a presumed inability to transmit the right kind of heritage to their child. I adopt a broader definition here to include cultural, racial, and gendered practices that shape the possibilities for sustaining connectedness, worth and power, through legitimate means. Hall (2001) considered how constructions of 'other' are generated, operates through a complex process of exploring who has heritage and who has not. A discourse of maternal incompetence has, I believe, emerged in response to those concerns. Critics see heritage is misappropriated, or in authentically deployed by white mothers leading to an ad hoc and messy approach (hook 1992). The pathway that links mixed race individuals to heritage appears unnecessarily clouded, or assigns heritage an unenviable task of transmitting, in entirety, a singular set of values as if they were 'Crown Jewels'. White mothers seem to destroy a sense of natural destiny where they deviate from shared behaviours. Academics equally term this 'cultural genocide' when referring to the impact of mixedness on the black British Caribbean community.

I touch on two dimensions that are often cited as evidence against white mothers' ability to do 'identity work', focusing on cultural and racial heritage.

Cultural Identity Work

Area based research has considered the growth of 'Black communities' as if they were constructed in isolation of the white women who were foundational to their development. I would argue that white women were acutely conscious of the need to uphold practices that signified national belongings, as evidenced by the early reports I studied. Whilst the focus was identifying difference, mundane

aspects of family life were passed over in favour of imagined interracial experiences. As one of the oldest contributors, Brenda gives us a flavour of the boundary work early white mothers may have undertaken on behalf of the collective.

'I don't know about you, but I've been to places and seen things where its made my head turn even to this day and age, I've said to my kids "it's people like her that make me feel ashamed because they are letting us down" 'If you see white family looking scruffy going shopping with their kids you would think oh poor sods they don't have a lot but if it was a mixed race family it would be because she's married to a black man her kids look scruffyand they don't look at it like she could have done that with a white man, or she could have been a black woman doing that, no, its because she is a white woman living with a black man, yeah, dirty slag BMW black mans whore that's what we always used to call them used to shout it in the street I put it down to ignorance' (Brenda 70's)

Brenda actively problematizes signification systems that degrade white mothers by drawing on traditional English behaviours to uphold her status. She tries to undertake essential boundary maintenance by re-imagining belongings that are important, and uses this to cast aspersions on English women with low standards. It is women with poor housewifery and parenting skills that are degrading to Englishness. Brenda's home is immaculately presented with communal spaces and stairwells maintained. Changing visions of womanhood are downplayed allowing sexualised behaviour and visible difference to be passed over. Children are presented as well mannered, clean, and tidy. Brenda claims authentic group membership by demonstrating continuity with shared collective ideals. Despite being located in a run-down and rough area of South East London, Brenda performs a particular version of whiteness, drawing on cultural symbols of social respectability, including dress code and behaviours, to challenge her exclusion from whiteness. Brenda talks about 'being responsible' as a way to deflect unwanted attention.

Lucy shares a working class background and is currently living in Hertfordshire with her second partner, a British born Jamaican. The transformation Lucy claims is conformity. Lucy met Michael whilst pregnant with a mixed child from a previous relationship. They have now been married for five years and have two further children. She works part-time to earn extra money but also to coincide with the school run. They were renovating the ex-council house they had just bought when I interviewed them. She talks about the identity work they jointly undertake:

'there's books about being mixed race, what it means, children's books so that she (pointing to child) can read it on her own, but most of the toys are white aren't they or they make them very dark, they don't do any light skinned stuff, she needs to see other people like her that's important, I think if they are brought up by single parents, but like, I don't think she will be she's got her daddy, we would really like to take her to Jamaica yes, but I don't think we'll be able to afford it, I mean that would be fantastic to take her to and show her other people and where part of her has come from, you have to have a lot of money to take your child to Jamaica but I can take her to things like Nottinghill Carnival, black theatre, yes yes she would love that, but you know she's in the kitchen making dumplings or bun, we try to make a lot of west Indian foods and we try to make dumplings and stew and that, we all love it, they love it, she pats the dough into shapes and gets me to fry it' (Lucy 20's)

Melissa and her partner are both graduates currently living in London. Moreover, as an adoptee, with Melissa's help, her partner had searched for his birth family to put his heritage into context. Developing children's connections through what might be considered unnatural, mechanistic processes was considered a crucial activity to ensure children have a balanced view of the world and secure sense of belonging. It was common to move beyond national boundaries to consider global cultures. 'Cultural resources' that demonstrate diversity within a global world were searched out alongside positive imagery, events, exhibitions and workshops to support self-esteem. In the extract there is an assumption that what is English is knowable or identifiable and that mixed children need to be supported or steered to understand and embrace minority identities, without the necessity to close other options.

'whereas I am English and getting English culture all around, so I don't need to bother with that bit, they get that naturally, I think it is really important that they can place themselves in world view to escape the idea of English being everything The world they grow up in will be very different – its so much smaller and diverse- travelling and studying really opened my eyes to that 'I take them to as many events and activities as I can. Recently we visited the British Museum and there was wonderful artist from China Jo is really into his art and so was fascinated (Melissa 30's)

Contributors acknowledged that urban areas provided access to resources and multicultural environments. Black partners were not explicitly acknowledged as cultural resources, but I would argue, in households where a Black male is

present, difference will be normalised by deconstructing oversimplifications or caricatures. This infers a role for black fathers in shaping a sense of belonging outside of white mothers' immediate influence. It would be easy to surmise belongings, read 'racial identity', are ultimately worked out by re-establishing relationships with black fathers. Understanding the mixed experience as a direct outcome of the embeddedness of well or underdeveloped 'pathways into the black community' has been taken as given. Clearly, this framework sets single white parents a difficult task if black fathers are absent. Again marginality cannot be taken as given. Ten contributors were single parents who demonstrated varying degrees of attachment to blackness. Jay had split from her Gambian partner and attachments to the extended family were tenuous, mostly on account of his behaviour. She identifies the benefits of her marginal position:

'I think having multicultural books around your children does help them, we've got a favourite we used to read African fairy stories as his bedtime story umgh and that's something for me only something minor but that was giving him some African culture I wondered if that's what they all read in Africa maybe that's what his dad might have had when he was small and other books umgh he sees his sisters occasionally and I have a really good network of friends, being on my own I can take him to so may places' (Jay 30s)

Rose framed blackness as a specialist subject, giving it a fixed and historical dimension but one that could be learnt.

'was your fist partner interested in Max learning about his culture?

'no not really (laughing) no that's my job I do all of that I've got a degree in race and culture so I've got all the right tools for teaching him that and when he show's interest I do but I don't push it on him I always have loads of books and magazines lying around and internet sites that he can go to and I'm part of People in Harmony they put on lots of activities like family picnics and talks that we go to' (Rose 30's)

I believe the point she is making is that her son can claim blackness, mixedness, or Igbo and operate in any of those spaces if he chooses. An absent birth father is not going to be a barrier. Rose indicates that she has sufficient skills to support him in that decision. Likewise, Rose is in a new relationship with a man from Sierra Leone who is happy to share West African culture with Max.

Four of the five 'African wives' with sons talked about male circumcision as one mode of formal initiation that indicates belonging. The symbolic act of physically marking a child, commonly passed off in the absence of white mothers, who felt it too stressful an event. Even so, they negotiated away from traditional or ritualistic ceremonies opting for a medicalised model.

'I had him circumcised that was a big thing but I was fine about it, it was something we must have discussed but I cant remember it was something that was important to him and so I thought okay and he sorted it all out and it was done in a clinic all done hygienically and it was fine but when I was pregnant for the second time I was actually really worried If I had another boy I thought ohh I don't want to do that again I felt quite cruel I couldn't actually I think I lost the essence of why it was so important so couldn't see the justification' (Rebecca 20's)

As discussed elsewhere, naming ceremonies were also a point of negotiation in symbolising belongings but were not always applied in a traditional way. Not all wives elected to take up their partner's name once married, not all children given African names followed customary practice. Moreover, not all mothers felt it was desirable or essential to centralise diversity in such overt ways. Lynda says,

'This is the thing this is the very thing I mean at our local church they are having an Irish musician come over and tonight it is traditional Irish music playing and we wouldn't go to that either and I wouldn't expect Mark to come to that no more than I would expect Mark to ask me to go along to a traditional Jamaican evening do you know what I mean' (Lynda 40s)

I believe Lynda challenges any assumption that mixed children miss out on 'black culture' due to the reluctance of white mothers to promote their ethnic heritage. Lynda is clear that identity cannot be consumed or snatched at organised events, neither is it so discrete as to be appropriated on those grounds. Essentialism signifies a bounded identity that Lynda feels alienates her children and she does not consider this type of exposure valuable or necessary for her children's sense of well-being.

For white mothers who lacked day to day contact with the black extended family, attachments were performed to re-affirm connections. Beth says,

'talking about head wraps I remember when I went to my in laws in Trinidad and we had been to a beach and I put this thing around my head and then I put a

sarong on and we were all laughing, and I introduced the word wigga to my step mother in law, which is a white version of a nigga, basically it's a wannabe nigga (laughter) and so I had this head wrap on and I said to her don't you think I look great, and the thing is that my daughter could do it (1sp) she could wear it and look great she could do it perfectly she would look fabulous, me I couldn't, it just looked ridiculous ' (Beth 30's)

Black communities might consider this an appropriation of black culture or parody that marks white women awkwardly out of place. Beth suggests that whilst respectful of culture she does not take it too seriously. In my opinion, Beth perceives attitudes and behaviours are salient dimensions of identity, whereas whiteness relates to skin tone. Beth also recognises she lacks legitimacy and authenticity to sanction belongings. No matter how well she performs she is not read as black. Beth's belongings to 'blackness' do not exist outside of contractual marriage ties or extended family networks. Locational shifts do not necessarily affect the performance of identity. As the 'genuine article', her daughter has the ability to perform multiple identities and layer her body with signifiers that can be read in different ways regardless of setting. This is a non-prescriptive approach, suggesting white mothers establish solid foundations that inform reconstruction. Cultural distinctions between reality and imaginary belongings blur, with no limitations set on how Englishness should be interpreted.

Gina's narrative reflected how significant establishing a strong cultural identity was to her relationship. Both parties were heavily involved in the emergent black community politics of the 1970s. International guests including members of the Black Power Movement had inspired Gina. Responding to the needs of the immediate local black community was considered more important than any one individual.

'I was still working for the church but also helping with this community project that he had, basically our whole relationship was built up on building up this community project which was to help young black unemployed people in Notting hill of course it was all part of an ideological struggle part of race relations people were bending over backwards to help I helped raise money and we were a good team in the sense that I could articulate all this stuff and do the admin and he would be kind of the vision part of it we were a good team in that sense and people liked what was going on because lots of people wanted to help with this sort of thing at the time there were lots of voluntary agencies more than willing to help there was a community action centre a black housing association I don't think that survived but there was a lot going on and it was more exciting that the

little plodding stops that we in our little church organisation were taking so I suppose I was falling in love with an idea as much as anything else'

But later Gina talks about cultures in conflict when she discussed homespace.

'He did a candle lit dinner for me one night low and behold one of his mates dropped round and he didn't turn him away and in a way this chap turned up and took part in the candle lit dinner and I didn't know how to say no that's not good enough, just walk away from that, but the idea of saying no to his friends never occurred to him, there was a chap that lived 2 floors up it was one of those multi-layered houses in Nottinghill we had a basement flat and there was this chap living further up and when we went away he would sort of look after the place and Leicester would leave him food and I just remember after our wedding the outrage I felt that you know there is a tradition about wedding cakes that the top layer you keep for the christening, umgh I had put it away and when I came back there was a huge slice out of it which he had taken, so it was things like that, where barriers were constantly being infringed and people would drop in at all times of day and night'

White mothers may not want to pass over a culture in its entirety but evaluate what they see as the benefits of each. Gina felt that her partner's emotional commitment lay first and foremost in the local community. This would not be a pattern she wanted to replicate with her sons. Gina acknowledged that she never stopped loving Leicester but could not continue living with his irrational and disorganised behaviour.

Arguably Sofia, Kath and Carys were regretful and talked about pain, conflict and tension that they then labelled cultural difference. Equally this may indicate that these particular women did not possess the necessary resources; financial, emotional, cultural or social i.e. networks, to support transformation and became trapped in inoperable spaces or retreated into the collective where they hoped to remain innocuous and unnoticeable.

Sofia was 30, with a successful career mapped out when Phillpa came along. She was one of a small number of women who framed parenting across cultures as a tense and difficult task. She is responding to criticism when she says:

'Her father occasionally tells me that I do not teach her enough about her blackness and occasionally he has said you are not bringing her up properly you are bringing her up as if she is white and I acknowledge that it is true but I do not

know anything else and my feelings have always been you teach her that side you know all about that but when he is upset he says oh you are bringing her up as a white child..... She has been confused which is why I tried to make contact with her paternal grandmother and her step brother and I tried to get more involved in that side and tried the thing is I just have no idea where I would go right now (Sofia 50's)

In this statement, I believe Sofia assumes responsibility for her daughter's lack of ethnic awareness. A related aspect is that Sofia does not question the role of her ex partner, or the need for her child to be 'black', but accepts the criticism as having some validity. Parenting skills are critiqued here in comparison with black women who are identified as a more appropriate and natural home for mixed children. This is reminiscent of the plan I looked at in the archives, to repatriate mixed children to the US. I would argue, Sofia lacks sufficient confidence to navigate new forms of belonging and retreats into whiteness, the only model of parenting she has. Arguably this space may be less easily navigated where her whiteness may be challenged.

Later she states:

'when I read articles saying mixed race children should not go to white families, because she is mixed I think Gosh, if anything happened to me, if anyone took Phillipa away and put her into care they would put her with a black family and she wouldn't like that now, because she's been so used to being in a white world she would not like it at all (Sofia 50's)

Earlier I discussed the fallout from discussions surrounding transracial adoption for birth mothers and I think this is a clear example of that. However, there is no clear evidence to indicate that white mothering is a deficit model. In resource rich households this outcome is distorted, where class difference differentiates experiences. Fourteen of the contributors were graduates or engaged in full-time study. Eight partners were also graduates. A further three contributors were professionals of high status. I would claim that in these households blackness was not the defining characteristic of belonging. A Black partners, ethnicity, relationship to family, networks, extended family networks particularly grandparents, siblings, school and social support networks are all factors that add an additional layer of complexity. In her research with white women, Byrne (2006) discussed how relationships to locality change post childbirth, where women make demands against resources in different ways. In this study it seems that many white mothers suddenly found themselves in local food outlets

searching for Yam and Cassava, or black hairdressers for specialist products and hair care advice. Sometimes these activities were difficult encounters.

In terms of hair care, Sam says

'I might go into a black hairdressers and ask them, I have done that before and I don't know if they [child] are accepted, like I say I went into this hairdressers and they were doing her hair and even then I felt they were judging me in a way you know here is another white girl with a black child' (Sam 30's)

Yet overall, findings indicate transitional rather than sudden change. Most women became sensitised to differential treatment and difference through partnerships rather than childbirth. How white mothers transitioned from business to maternal worlds and back again can only be touched on here. Tara talks about taking her newborn baby into the work place during maternity leave.

'You are treated differently you are, certainly when we had Katie some woman I used to work with came up and went oh she's black and like there was an immediate change and she said my daughter has got a baby by a black man but it is not as dark as that though, no heart no thought that you are battered by these comments'. (Tara 30's)

Tara senses *'immediate change'* in social relations but does not interpret this as a shift in context from being in a familiar space as a worker, to being in the workspace as a new mother. The terms *'no heart and battered'* perhaps indicate that this is not the first negative response she has experienced. What she alludes to is the extent by which white mothers become public property and open to scrutiny.

Conversely, Marie demonstrates how she became sensitised to difference through friendship networks.

'I have a friend she is mixed race and she is very political and she has kind of got me on the bandwagon a bit really because I never noticed anything before. I suppose it is really ignorance we are all the same as it is not that it is deliberate, until she pointed these things out I didn't notice but because her son is the same age as my son, they have both grown up now, but looking back they did everything the same, and I keep thinking yes she's right' (Marie 30's)

Marie is taking a politicised stance that moves belonging beyond skin colour to a discourse of rights. This flattens racial hierarchies. Race is an agenda you engage with and believe on account of a shared value base. Where she uses the term '*same as all*' she indicates a prior position; like other white folk, she was party to inequitable social processes and embodied social practices in a vacuum of colour blindness. Reflecting on the texture of everyday experiences for two boys, one white (her son from a prior relationship), the other mixed, we might argue that Marie is part of a group who consistently deliver different outcomes through claims of colour blindness. Marie could be speaking from a marginal space. She no longer views the boundaries as consensual, but adopts an increasingly politicised engagement with the state. Marie may be searching for new understandings concerned with how her mixed race daughter will be treated.

Absolutely, motherhood marked a transition in the lives of all of the women. I anticipated this would also mark transitioning from an unraced to racialised space, or that white mothers would become strategic in ways they had previously not considered. Childcare, for example, might reflect racialised views but this was not born out by the evidence. Sonia responds to a question asking if having a black or Nigerian child minder was considered to be important.

'I needed a child minder desperately and people had said to me that its better to have a child minder in a home situation rather than send him to a nursery as a baby... she was Jamaican and so he was brought up in a very Jamaican household and was eating all these Jamaican foods and she was minding a while lot of other children who where mainly Jamaican, and I think that was good for him, that was interesting but umgh other than that no, I would never think about something like that at all, it would not enter my head to think in terms of classifying people in that way, nothing like that but interestingly the school he goes to is Catholic and there are lots of Nigerian children in the school, so a lot of his friends are now second generation Nigerian ' (Sonia 40s)

This might indicate that white mothers are not strategic but naturally drawn into spaces of difference sensing a degree of ease and comfort. Equally women like Sonia can take for granted a greater cultural mix by living in urban centres. Returning to Sofia's narrative, childbirth had little impact on her relationship to the locality, where a nanny undertook most of the childcare and play. Sofia's life happened outside this immediate locality or the sphere of motherhood. However, that is not to say that transformation did not occur. Sofia illustrates new thinking where networks and class appears to be a distinguishing factor.

'When I took her to Disneyland, the first time all the characters were blond haired and blue eyed and I cant tell you how happy I was when I saw Esmeralda and Pocahontas coming down the street In my heart I think I'm not doing a good enough job but I professionally I know that a lot of children will have identity issues regardless, being sensitive to a child's needs are what is important. She now wants to do modelling but knows how difficult it is for black girls to break into that which is amazing really but I am proactive in pointing them out I am trying to expose her to black role models without it being too obvious and luckily I have quite a few professional contacts that can help her with that and they think she is great. (Sofia 50's)

Temporal dimensions may be more significant in terms of racial awakenings including the length of the relationship prior to childbirth. This appeared to sensitise or desensitise racialisation. Fourteen of the mothers had single children, making comparison with a different mothering experience impossible. Sonia, addresses this point,

'I don't know whether it would be any different with any other child, and I don't see that there is anything specific about me having a mixed race child, I really don't feel that, I mean, I suppose having a Black partner and maybe, again it is about the fact that Ben isn't very obviously mixed, so I don't know I think it is more about having a Black partner, that is the thing that has made me confront things in ways that I wouldn't have done otherwise, maybe because I had 14 years of that before he was born I mean motherhood has changed me utterly, but I don't know about the mixed race thing. (Sonia 40's)

Sam discusses general anxieties associated with becoming a mother as opposed to racialised concerns.

I don't really see it, I just see them as my children, I don't really look, well I think I did to begin with, when they were little, especially as babies, you know you are worrying about them, but I remember my mum saying something to me when I said that I was worried about going to mother and toddler clubs and things, she said I was just like that with Adam, he was the youngest and she had me and Stacey to worry about, but he was a bit mollycoddled, even now she worries about him, so I don't know ' that's just a mother and son thing, with boys there is always a slight edge' Sam (30's)

Racial Identity Work

Academia has tended to elevate discussion of mixedness to models of racial identity development; pondering how mixed race young people cope with

'interracialness'. Advocates of this approach have theorised 'black' as a natural home for mixed race young people who should accept the racialised identity assigned to them and learn how to do blackness (Harman 2009:1315). White mothers did refer to this label as a political identity, representing a place of safety and a racialised zone where children would find tolerance and acceptance as a minority ethnic group member. A number of white mothers were sensitive to the idea that children would be better off if they understood blackness and accepted their place within it. Politically this made sense, but where evidence suggests deteriorating achievement and attainment for black boys in particular, it would be difficult to reconcile this approach within households for whom education and aspiration is a strong driver. As previously mentioned, of the (30) mothers, over half were graduates or professionals. Assigning children any identity that inferred a deficit model was completely off their radar.

As a professional with experience of delivering equalities training to a number of social care practitioners and educationalists, Carol finds it difficult to reconcile value in racial identity work where the final destination is fixed – producing a top ten checklist – but somewhat contradictorily, appreciates that cultural sensitivity is important.

'I think this is quite hard because as we were discussing earlier it is like a yo yo, because you are not a good parent if you have not taught her about being black and what that means, and she needs to embrace her black culture and that is a difficult concept for a young child, it somehow needs to reinforce they are different, whereas attachment is most important to young children, if you talk to a white person or black come to that, they tend to equate mixed race with mixed up, but I don't think either of them offer the solution do they, I mean should I have thought about this ten years ago? You can feel guilty, I don't know, when I was teaching everything was based on policies, equal rights and racial awareness so that is why in a normal world I would never have done that, I cant really say, knowing the things I do because of that, I don't know, mixed race, mixed heritage, what is that, the only way to do it is by including both from both sides, but not as delivered in schools you know food from around the world, that locates it elsewhere is not addressing it for her (Carol 40s)

Carol senses a colour-blind world disadvantages children from minority cultures but equally, does not see current approaches to diversity and multiculturalism as paving the way for a brave new world. White mothers acknowledged that in some instances mothers and children may chose to imagine identities in contradictory ways, but Carol appears to be opening the way for her daughter to

redefine racial identity in a way that works for her. Despite acknowledged barriers, white mothers were reassured that children were comfortable with their identities in ways that have not been explored as a possibility. As indicated elsewhere, the majority of the contributors defined their children using an extensive range of terminology and host of factors that only included racial categories when pushed to do so. Black was also an awkward fit, evidenced by a struggle to achieve inclusion for children seen to fall outside its boundaries. Mothers were conscious of barriers operating to belonging including physiognomy, class, location and mother's status. In a black collective belonging often had to be negotiated through gatekeepers.

Rose resists this type of negotiation altogether:

'I don't think you should impose that (fixed identity) on them and identifying white mothers as the problem is really very annoying, mixed kids have to know it all, like the names of the last 5 presidents of Jamaica the size of the population, its main exports, language, history etc. people expect them to know all that - if they want to learn if they are interested then yeah I try to encourage it with books, TV websites trips, but he's not interested at the moment' (Rose 30's)

Ten fathers had children with multiple partners and five of these families discussed positive extended family networks. Often white mothers such as Jay and Chris were instrumental in re-establishing contact between an absent father and his children. Jay became a positive and stabilising factor in three 'black' girls lives, where relationships between biological parents were tense and estranged. Jay talked about being overwhelmed by a sense of responsibility, but continued to support and see the girls until her son was 6 and her relationship collapsed on very difficult terms. Chris has found it very difficult to move on after a second relationship failed, leaving her as an older single mum with two children of vastly different ages. Her partner had been supported to reproduce a home environment for three mixed race children from a prior relationship. In reality, this often meant Chris making all the arrangements and having the children alone. Once the relationship ended, Chris realised that she was reliant on someone else to make sure Keith continued to see his daughter. Chris generalised her frustration, claiming Black men were irresponsible, lacking in commitment and immature.

Research exploring racialised difference in re-constituted families would make a significant contribution to developing understandings that I only touch on. Anne was one of five contributors who had children with multiple fathers of black

ethnicities and with partners known to have other children. All her relationships had been with Black men and she was now in her late thirties. Making comparisons added complexity to the interview by failing to grasp just who was being discussed, or by an incessant need to reference. This tended to fragment the family in uncomfortable and unnatural ways. Anne had a long-term relationship with a local 'player' from her late teens and two teenage girls, before remarrying a much younger man and having two more children. Sam died prematurely at 10 days old and this had a dramatic impact on Anne's emotional health and wellbeing. She was still mourning this loss at the time of the interview.

Anne pointed out that grasping at difference within difference was unproductive, and references difference between the full sisters as opposed to half siblings.

'you cant look at them when they are small and just look at mine D & S (eldest two girls) are so different, I had a lot of trouble with D at school I was constantly up the school she was going through a bad time I had just lost Taz and things were really difficult yeah Leroy didn't deal with it and D wasn't getting to see her dad, I think that was tough and she needed that, she's much more black if you know what I mean, she loves music, she, all her friends are black we ended up switching schools, she went up to Longfield –.....yeah she loved it, but her sister, she couldn't be more different she's done really well at school' (Anne 30's)

For Anne, racial identity is grounded in context, preference and felt affiliations. Yuval Davis & Anthias (1998:5) argue that minority ethnic individuals demonstrate a number of belongings i.e. to be British or British Asian. Again, the question is why mixed identities have not been conceived of in similar terms.

Brenda's opening line, whilst still taking off her coat and before any questions, was to say

'I don't know why they say they are mixed up' (Brenda 70's)

I do not pick up on this immediately, and during the interview, Brenda quickly revisits the notion of being mixed as problematical.

'I don't know why they think that because they are mixed they have got to have more black culture than white culture Its strange to me luckily enough I like black music more than white music so they listen to that all the time anyway and I

made a point of teaching the different ways well they learnt what happened to our descendants' (Brenda 70's).

Brenda is resisting the dominant view that mixed race children should be socialised into black spaces. I think Brenda is suggesting that such differentiation has little value to everyday life where black culture is collectively and openly consumed through English, urban and Britishness. In fact, Brenda's starting point has already stretched the boundaries of what English might be. Brenda chooses to locate belonging in intergenerational patterns of behaviour and historic practices, biology and individual connections that have direct relevance to her family, to normalise her experience. Intimate connections convey a strong sense of authenticity to her children's mixed identity. Brenda is not necessarily emphasising heterogeneity. I argue she challenges simple systems of signification that determine status as belonging or non-belonging.

It was common for contributors to feel angry at the need to comply with ethnic classification, where identity was considered a 'personal' not state decision. White mothers wondered at the purpose of ethnic monitoring forms where it had not redressed inequalities (Aspinall 2000, Owen 2001). In response, women offered complex and challenging descriptors to muddle distort and confound classification by including every possible affiliation imaginable. Tracey would manually write that her son was of Jewish, Muslim, White English, Black Caribbean ethnicity in place of mixed white/black Caribbean. Where identity was a fusion of colour [whiteness] with ethnicity [Caribbeaness] the integrity of the categories was questioned. Somewhat contradictorily, contributors' felt belonging was lived through in ever changing circumstances, not worn like an overcoat. Clare's comment powerfully resonated across the sample where she stated

'You don't notice it [visible difference] or you are less conscious of it, the same with our children, to us they are individual children but its what other people see, and you have to react to what other people see, yes that's what happens, you're kind of second guessing, I just see Alex, but other people umgh I mean, I would hate to think that when Alex walks into a room to speak they are saying wow he's a black man, I just think he looks very attractive, but umgh maybe they are because he is often the only one in the room (Clare 30's)

Clare considers how the white collective will respond to Alex in the moment that he is positioned as a Black man. This indicates the potential for an experience to

be shaped by wider social attitudes; however, that experience is not one that she invests in.

Unlike the majority of the contributors, Kath, Sofia and Carys felt that difference was a barrier. Kath tried to re-negotiate family relationships by aligning with her white family to re-cement her belongings in a white world. Clearly with such a troubled past, this was a rocky road and it remains difficult to assess how this will work out, where the family have strong racist views. Presently she believes this will not impact on her daughter. Sofia and Carys sense that positive racial identity development would help to resolve, overcome, and compensate for barriers. Each approached this in a different way. Sofia secured a place at an elite private school to ensure her daughter socialised in the 'right networks', believing this would guarantee a degree of social authority and privilege that skin colour may have jeopardized. Neither mother or daughter had particularly mixed networks but this related as much to class difference as race. Identity work was aspirational and network orientated.

Carys was more conscious of blackness, claiming whiteness as a resource to counterbalance its affect. Carys claimed white privilege by aligning with a white ethnic group membership to achieve anonymity and safety. Carys insists on ticking white to complete any official documentation, claiming that identity for her daughter. She assumes this identity will not be questioned although finds it difficult to determine what whiteness or English is.

'Well this may sound silly but most people might look at her and say she's black. When people ask me I don't want to say she's part black or half Jamaican I want to say she's half white, but that's classing her as being from black origins, and I must admit that when I took her to hospital 2 weeks ago I put her down as white, D is not about and she is with me and I'm white, she's got just as much right to be white as black, ill probably keep putting white until she's older and then let her decide I'm going to keep putting that she white she's living here with me and for all they know she may have a white dad the amount of time people ask me and I just turned around and said actually her dad is white and they believe me so I kept it going' (Carys 20s)

Reluctance to engage with children's [black] ethnicity is often cited as evidence of white mothers' latent racism. A small number of contributors disclosed anxiety attached to blackness; this was more prominent for mothers with sons. Tracey is a single mum with a grown-up son. As part of a longer discussion about her son's ethnicity, Tracey talks about the category 'black'.

'I think there is something quite scary about what black is, and I think, as well I mean, without a doubt I do not have a problem about the fact that my son does not have the Same skin colour as me and I can see that and I guess that's a really odd thing isn't it.....I think black is scary to a lot of people. I think that's not necessarily about the colour of somebody's skin, but its about all the baggage that goes with it, isn't it, so if people can name their children as something other than black, because they know the crap that black people get, then I think its that thing of holding onto some of their whiteness, it is saying yeah, yeah my child isn't completely like them he has a lot of white (Tracey 40's)

Interestingly, Tracey reveals a complex layering of meanings, switching between personal and collective, visible [skin tone] and structural [equality], closing with an acknowledgement of white privilege – an advantageous and protective resource against racism and mistreatment. Tracey is well versed in racial politics and heavily involved in equalities work. Whilst accepting a black political identity she can justify why white mothers might choose to highlight whiteness as a personal identity. This was a difficult proposition mirroring tensions I identified within the archival research. To deploy whiteness was considered blinkered, setting unrealistic expectations and aspirations for children who would be exposed as 'outsiders'. The converse was to underuse and undervalue the power of whiteness and the benefit it conveyed. Reay et al (2007) have argued on similar issues, appearing to frame middle class whiteness as a mode of valorisation that is distasteful. What is being questioned here is legitimacy – a right to use heritage as a commodity and to cash on the benefits. Arguably mixed race children are precluded from such social capital as 'fake' entities. Often barred from claiming white attachments or needing to pass initiation tests to denote genuine and authentic attachment to a black community. In general an acknowledgement of the benefits that accrue to middle class mixed race young people is often suppressed. Further research in this area would mark a significant departure from an overly working class bias.

Within working class environments, white mothers reported a mixed response to belongings and varying commitment to local networks. Young women often formed friendships with other white mothers, comfortable that they would not need to explain themselves. Despite limited resources, children within these areas were socialised in fairly multicultural spaces and attended schools with a greater ethnic mix of pupils. Evidence suggests women were more likely to have a greater degree of daily interaction with other black or minority ethnic families. This may be contrived for safety reasons, a sense of belonging, or reflect that

mothers felt it important that children have the opportunity to identify with blackness. Likewise, it could simply be a matter of geography. In areas of social housing, parents could find that they were living in close proximity to other mothers with mixed children. Some mothers thought this beneficial as it reduced a sense of isolation. Others resented this clustering of mixedness, suggesting housing policy increased their visibility and vulnerability.

Amongst working class women, the findings indicate a stronger tendency to define sons as black in response to local social attitudes. In single parent households there was a strong sense that sons ought to be armed with an awareness of what being black might mean. Equally, there was also a sense that young people were growing up in a different world, where ethnicity was a form of social capital to be exploited; yet this was often undermined by the presence of a strong racist element in the immediate area. The narratives also indicate that compared to middle class white mothers, working class women were more conscious of stigma. Heather is talking through her experience of living in a working class environment in the 1970s. Local networks shaped life, notably the factory, which employed a large number of locals, and the social club. Heather talked about the assumptions and aspirations people had. Yet, she chooses to express white anxiety as a reflection of a particular social context that has since passed.

'It was one of those places where everyone knew everyone it was different then back in the 70s you met the bloke next door and you went to the local pub so it was so much more difficult and people would say err excuse me you can't leave the house with that baby, people will see you, I heard that sort of thing said a lot and to my sisters, they had to put up with a lot, they used to say 'your sister is black mans meat, she should be ashamed', it made it difficult for them, and they used to ask my sisters what I was like, if I had said anything, and they said no white man would touch me now, they wouldn't want me, there weren't many coloured people then and I and I'm okay with it but at work people would say things little things all the time like oh he's alright I expect Heather fancies him isn't that right Heather you know that sort of thing as if I fancied any black man just because he was black (Heather 60's)

Erica shares the notion of unsettled social relations in working class environments where she talked about shifting dynamics within her local community. She was unprepared for the response that being in a mixed relationship would provoke.

'I think it is more about having a Black partner than having mixed kids, If you are white women with a black man people look at you like you have sex with anyone and that you are always available and like I said I hadn't met a black man before and I wasn't like that but it was different and you do get treated differently ' (Erica 30's)

In the following extract, Delphine extends the scope for belonging beyond cultural awareness or racial identity. She emphasises it is the intimate and direct connections which are significant. In this case she yearns for a relationship between a father and son, as opposed to abstract experiences of belonging linked to cultural competence or heritage. On reflection, Delphine recognised how mothering a mixed child demands proactive actions, small and in her case big acts. Significant interventions were required to ensure connections with a black family were sustained once the relationship had ended. This included a visit to Robin Island to foster a relationship between a grandfather and grandson. Delphine challenges the notion of natural and essential where she emphasised that attachments cannot be taken for granted but need to be nurtured. Where associations become distant over time, cultural and ethnic difference might masquerade as disconnections where in reality, it is personal relationships that act as primary barriers.

'I thought it was really important that he had a relationship with his dad, it was one of the things that worried me a lot, that I wouldn't be able to sustain that, I felt totally powerless I would have liked his dad to have much more to do with him, to spend time with him, there was nothing I could do, so it wasn't so much to do with the culture, I just felt it was the connection that was very important he desperately wanted to connect with his dad and his dad was letting him down' (Delphine 60's)

Working class white mothers did not believe the experience of middle class mothers would greatly differ from their own, indicating that racism cuts across class divide. In fact, there was limited sense of a shared experience between middle and working class white mothers. Arguably, middle class white mothers were less inclined to identify visible difference as a barrier. Belonging was negotiated and reconstituted using wide-ranging networks of opportunities, values and social circles. Moreover, this group of mothers argued that ethnicity was less important than class alignments, indicating the level of investment they were willing to make to secure belonging. Access to good schools and education in general social opportunities and learning experiences, occupational networks and shifting residential locations were strategies designed to increase a range of

benefits and privileges for their children. Included here was the assurance that ethnicity conveyed an additionality lacking in other young people, as opposed to any deficit.

Rather than see marginality, mothers talked about a dynamic status of possibilities and choice. Rather than accepting the limitations of boundaries they embraced the potential they offered and mobilised high aspirations. I interpreted white mothers' positioning of their children as cultural linguists, holding a portfolio of transferrable skills that gave them an advantage. Middle class women such as Sofia had assets, disposable resources and lived in affluent surroundings. Travel was a strategy to expose children to difference, yet often children attended predominantly white schools and socialised in white networks. In terms of children's belongings it is unclear what that might mean. This approach might be interpreted by outsiders as positioning children as white, or using white privilege to appropriate value. Culturally children were 'white' where this stood in for middle class, a position that did not exclude Black partners. However, politically they remained aligned with black groups.

Racialised Relationships

As opposed to marginality, contributors nurtured a safe home environment aimed at fostering a secure identity, including electing to stay in a mixed relationship. The impact of new relationships on children's identity was carefully considered. White male presence was seen to unsettle household coherence where it is exposed as prejudicial and hierarchical. White male authority was considered to put mixed race children at risk. There was a high degree of self-regulation, evidence of racialised consciousness that women had been accused of lacking. Tracey talks about active choices about future relationships.

'it has definitely impacted on my other relationships and on future partners, I did have a white partner but knew I could never have children with him, I felt really uncomfortable with having children with different fathers anyway but having children with different fathers of different races I just couldn't do it, I guess the decision not to have another baby with Ron [white partner] was a tough call because I cared about him and I knew it would be really hard for him, when I said I wanted an abortion (3sp) umh, but there was no way I was ever going (2sp) to go ahead with that, it would have been yet another barrier for Louis, he would look like a real outsider in a white family, and it would be obvious to the world that he doesn't live with his father' (Tracey 40's)

I contend that culturally inscribed gendered relations become apparent where Tracey sees a tension in priorities. For women with sons, this was more

pronounced. Racial composition of the household is significant, but I suggest racialised masculinities are a distinguishing factor. Six women were in serial relationships with Black men.

Five women were in relationships with white men, two of these were married. Sofia says,

'well my last boyfriend although he never admitted it, I was very aware that it was an issue for him, because he could not pass her off as his own child, and he owned several restaurants and I remember him saying that his staff were asking where P came from and whether we had adopted her and he told them to mind their own business but when he was drunk he would say if only she looked like you [blond and blue eyed] I could take her on in 5 minutes and we had a huge fight because that was grossly insensitive and offensive and so this has been an issue between us (Sofia 50's)

Sofia is confronted by the impact a mixed child has on her relationship. She uses the term offended to describe how she is being read. In my opinion, middle and upper class status can act as a stabilising factor in inhabiting whiteness, but Sofia cannot pass this surety onto her daughter.

I did not ask contributors directly to talk about mothering practices but patterns emerged across the women. Fear of rejection was a factor for some mothers.

Natalie whose baby was only 8 months says:

'Its best to grow up thinking you are black, but then I think well what are you growing up to think about your mum, if you bring them up and they are like in a very black environment, and they are taught that white people are racist, and are going to call you names, then how does that make them feel about their own mother, you know, like am I supposed not to like my mum as well' (Natalie sub 20)

Natalie demonstrates layers of belongings generally obscured from view. There is an interface between familial and collective identification, together with interplay between colour, ethnicity, and place. If visible difference has primacy, Natalie struggles to locate her child in one specific place. Blackness emerges in certain locations and under certain circumstances, but given this contingency, fixed boundaries are destabilised. In doing so, she devalues collective ideals as anonymous spaces, favouring individual attachments as secure and legitimate

sources of belonging. If maternal attachment were considered a source of belonging, many of these challenges would not appear so discrete.

Marie talks in similar terms,

'There is a whole set of questions around the fear of rejection by your child in later life because of the society we live in I guess you know that if you have been brought up by a white person and white society does not treat you very well suddenly you start disliking white people and that includes your mum and I think that is that must be an issue for a lot of children' (Marie 30's)

Although Marie indicates a potential for children to read their mothers as members of a white collective, this sense of distance seems at odds with the mixed environment that white mothers feel they create. Attachment, emotional intimacy, and ethnicity are seen to pull young people's alliances into different directions. What divides families appears to be academically significant as opposed to what families share. A powerful act of separation is to locate children in communities that white mothers can never belong to. Difference contributes to the idea that future relationships are precarious and fragile. The challenge is to consider mixed race a viable and mobile identity navigating places of possibility, a perspective that I will later cover.

Professionals working with particularly vulnerable white mothers may need to address problematical attachments in more detail, if they do not see themselves in their child and read them as other. In this case, physical difference may be a complicating factor in mother child relationships and in a small number of cases has the potential to be alienating for mothers, putting young children at risk. This requires further research, as this may be a transitional phase that can be supported.

As Clare indicates

'It just hit me you are never going to look like me like my blue eyes and people will always think I have adopted you or I am a child-minder or something because there is nothing of me in you that is wrong now but I remember thinking that at the time' (Clare 30's)

Clare is initially overwhelmed by a form of difference that is forceful and unexpected, with implications for attachment and belonging. Where she says 'there is nothing of me in you', this is a position of detachment that gives racial

difference a sense of reality. Likewise, 'mother' conveys a set of powerful ideological doctrines intertwined with whiteness, which Clare is barred from claiming. In using the term 'that is wrong now', Clare indicates a position of change and reflection. Strengthening maternal connections underpins boundary collapse. This is a positive outcome, providing opportunities to perform mixedness and encourage fluidity, albeit in the privacy of home space. This lays foundations for later life and the development of a secure mixed identity, which has integrity.

Rose resists categorisation as a mode of belonging, including acceptance of the racial identity assigned to you.

'I think if you are the mother of a child that's got mixed heritage mixed race, whatever you call it, if they say that the child is black, then you are denying your own involvement in that child's life, your denying that child part of its identity, and it annoys me when black people say to me, well whether you like it or not white people view my child as black, well not all white people do view him as black, because people are aware of mixed race children' (Rose 30's)

Rose unsettles a dualism where she identifies a paradigm shift marking increasingly multiracialised societies. In my opinion, she is claiming that a transformed political landscape is a possibility. This is a clear rejection of marginality and a challenge to claims of indistinctiveness. Controversially, white mothers consider single signifiers to anchor children in spaces of blackness that they did not necessarily identify with, or understand. However, white mothers did not all see value in a fictive group called 'mixed race', despite almost all using the label to define their child. These two very different positions demonstrate that ethnicity is not necessarily the most salient identity, and a category to span such diversity is valueless, other than to demonstrate heterogeneity within the wider population. Interrelations of ethnicity and class created different possibilities. White mothers on social housing developments talked of multicultural networks in areas with high numbers of migrant families yet high levels of racism. Middle class mothers talked of extended trips to visit families but cultural isolation.

Relocation to the Borders: the construction of chaotic home space

The representations that mixed families are problematical is deeply woven into official materials and populist opinion, to such a degree that non-belonging is an accepted common sense paradigm to be proved otherwise. Mixed households were positioned as a unit of extraordinariness, curiosity, and exception. As previously discussed, officials struggled to make sense of representations of

disorderly and debased households that did not match their experience. In the early reports, mixed children's physical being, emotional balance and level of intelligence were scrutinised (Flemming 1929). Yet, mixed households demonstrated better standards of living than their counterparts did, claimed to result from gullible and overly generous black fathers (Fletcher). White mothers signified compromised expectations in social, sexual, economic and educational spheres. Together mixedness was a hotbed of sexual perversion, a chaotic space of cultural disjuncture where racial difference was neither worked at nor harmonised.

At the crossroads of a number of competing discourses, a whole-scale attack against white mothers is launched. Marriage and kinship conjoin complex sites of incompatibility, leading to tenuous and insubstantial unions where women are discarded as better opportunities arise. Women's authority in a domestic domain is challenged where poor housekeeping skills, money management, resourcefulness, and parenting, capitalise on imagined cultural conflict. By contrast, Black men were shown to be loving fathers, good providers and aspirational of the opportunities that England provided to their children, whereas white mothers lack aspiration. I contend this onslaught was mindful of the need to secure public support or at least antipathy to immigration and settlement. White mothers therefore became an easy scapegoat. In this scheme, it is the whiteness of the mother that contaminates the home environment and the mental wellbeing of the child. This is a degraded and unstable whiteness.

Several authors in the field of mixedness suggest that mixed race families cannot claim ordinary status (Alibi-Brown 2001, Ifeungkwe 2001, Root 1996). I would argue this fuels the notion of disjuncture that continues to feed through into contemporary analysis of the mixed race 'home space'. 'Scientific' research interrogates the re-production of culture within the white home space and determines what emphasis white parents/carers place on children's exposure to 'blackness' (Twine 1999,2009). In objectifying mixed households as spaces lacking in 'blackness', the assumption of Blackness as a natural location is challenged. One consequence has been constructions of mixed race young people who struggle for a positive identity – be it black or white (Barns & Harman 1315). Being a white mother myself, I call for a shift in discursive tendencies that construct Blackness as the sole destination for mixed race children, arguing in this research, a sense of detachment did not frame the mother child relationship.

By emphasising a genetic legacy grounded in unnatural acts, the state are seen to observe that mixed children's cultural and ethnic needs are better met by

placing them with 'natural families' and that a white mother's attachment is less significant.

Clare, who previously described her little boy as mixed parentage, says,

'They ask personal questions like, what is it like to sleep with a black man and then my friend said, if you stay together I would advise you not to have children and I remember my mum saying how different it would be for her if she had to have a black grandchild – I think actually I have been very hurt by this, my good friend and I never told her this and I should have done as she is his godmother. Recently she was telling me when she was pregnant she went to see the doctor she described him and said he turned out to be a paki. she was disappointed but thought okay but when she had the baby she said oh my god this big black mama came in to the delivery room. That has destroyed the friendship really and I should get it out into the open. She looks down on black and that includes my family..... I often think about that, I do call him black in my head, when he went to Badgers I was concerned that there is no black member of staff, it does not stop me but I do think about it, about how people will respond, my partner more so I think (Clare 30's)

Clare is sensing that beyond the immediate household Josh will be marginalised due to visible difference. In this moment what is visible overrides bloodlines to map non-belonging onto her son in ways that precludes Clare. In believing her partner can more easily identify with exclusion, she externalises black male experience as substantially different to her own and senses both males are black. Marginality is acknowledged in her claim that even she sees Josh as black in her head, a position that reflects how the white collective may respond to him. Within 'home space' Clare does not accept this as a limitation but is sensitised to the potential for differential treatment beyond her control.

Beth contests this idea undermining the notion of transgression

'once I was with Andrew really it was, yes, other people sort of pointed it out to me, that the relationship was wrong, but I didn't feel that at all it felt perfectly normal, when you are a couple and you are in your own home it really doesn't factor, it really is more about it being a problem for other people, ugh it is not as important as people on the outside think because you know, we are a little family and ugh you know we love each other, and take care of each other, and that has nothing to do with race or what is termed race, so for me its a good place to be, my relationship is great, having Bethany is wonderful, I live in a nice home she goes to a great school, so being mixed race in South London is good, there are

so many, but when you step outside of that, I am aware that it is an issue, there really is an issue, its part of the social fabric, part of society and as a white mother of a mixed child, I would be very protective if necessary and I deal with it in different ways, you can ignore it and pretend that it doesn't happen or you can confront it there are lots of different ways of dealing with this (Beth 30's)

Richly laden with discussions about complex family relationships and social networks, Veronica discusses an expansive world of mixedness. Veronica has had several significant partners, as have her grown-up children. What might appear to be a chaotic and complex web of relationships with high levels of transience, I suggest acts as re-constituted community at a micro level. In her domain, Veronica challenges modes of belonging organised along racialised or biological lines, yet these remain important elements of who she is. Her East End upbringing, her working class roots, her strong emotional commitment to her immediate family are all significant. Veronica narrates a particular form of Englishness that is working class but not necessarily white.

Drawing from Williams (1958), the landscapes that Veronica was exposed to as a child were neither exotic nor unusual, but rather ordinary spaces in which difference was an everyday occurrence and normalised. To be in a mixed relationship conforms in Veronica's mind, to what happens in inner cities. Veronica does not sense she has departed or crossed over somewhere leaving this behind; her mixed family does not challenge her sense of belonging. She has not transgressed boundaries. Connectedness is sustained through consensual acts such as family gatherings, weddings and gossip sharing, where difference is mediated through individual interactions. Rather than chaotic spaces, narrative accounts point to solid social networks amongst families of difference, albeit small in number.

I draw comparison with Penny's narrative where significant elements talk through her negative experience with social workers. As potential adoptive parents Penny anticipated close scrutiny, but felt the objectification of mixed households as a site of tension, was often made explicit. Mixed households were scoured for signs of latent racism or past misdemeanours. Whilst Penny felt that marriage magnified difference for all couples, despite being in a long term marriage with happy children, social work attitudes were overly deterministic in terms of reading into mixedness problems.

'When Mark and I decided to adopt that's when I knew we had problems. Social services have got no idea, they said that multicultural families are like gold dust but then they treated us like freaks. They may as well have got out a Dulux

colour chart, they were worried about how a mixed child might fit into the family, they said it makes difficult attachments, what a joke, have you seen my family I said to her, what does that mean for my kids, we had to go through so many processes finance, money, sex, values, don't get me wrong I'm not saying that these are not important, but all families have differences, she just thought ours would be more difficult to manage. She said it was important for placement success, as fair skinned kids might not look like they belong. Who's she kidding, one of my kids is almost white, she probably went home thinking that she has problems, but she is the most black [culturally] of them all. (Penny 40's)

'A Call to Arms': Scrutiny, Border Guards and Gatekeeping

In Chapter 3, the literature review was used to demonstrate collective coherence is neither fictive nor real. Anderson 's (1983) concept of simultaneity allowed nations to emerge through joint actions. These actions demonstrate knowledge of the collective, and through this we sense connectedness to anonymous individuals. Symbolic, spatial and collective acts ratify the collective as a consensus building framework from which nationality is imagined. Using archival materials I examined how individuals modelling behaviours in its defence gave the nation a degree of authenticity. I argue a 'call to arms' emerged as a specific form of intervention in circumstances where anti-miscegenation law was seen as lacking. Concerned local residents, groups and institutions, petitioned governments for immediate action and response designed to halt race mixing. Welfare institutions, religious organisations, state services and academia petitioned government to set out a framework for dealing with interracial sex in the absence of law. Strangeness no longer lay elsewhere in the Empire and colonies abroad, but resided in close proximity to English citizens in English cities.

Boundaries were under constant threat where lifestyle and culture jarred on a daily basis and space was marked in new ways, embedded in everyday life and routinely performed in social settings. Archival sources point to the small number of facilities to cater for local 'newcomers', including cafes, shops, and boarding houses. These establishments, however small, attracted disproportionate police interest, and were re-imagined as gambling dens and brothels, or a social hub for Black men and the white women they attracted. In racialised zones what was everyday was distorted and experienced as unrecognisable. Mixedness was the antithesis to all that had gone before, and an attack on the moral and racial fibre of the nation.

In racialised zones long-standing communities of working class white women were positioned as fearful of sexual approach and in need of male protection. Working class white masculinities were challenged by a diminution of white male power, including access to women's bodies and employment opportunities. I argue that where spatial and social distance was compromised, class division resounded into the background but did not go away. In areas already inscribed as marginal, boundaries were re-drawn in response to internal 'other'. Visible difference stood in for ethnic or national belongings that lay elsewhere. Vron Ware (1999:305) defines the organised activities of collectives through 'whispering squads', groups that often leading to vigilantism. Direct action appeared to be condoned where public bodies took little action. From the material I sourced, local residents seized the opportunity to challenge racialisation based on working class identities, invoking what was shared across the collective was whiteness and Englishness (Young 1944).

Censure & Sanction

Censure and sanction emerged as significant reactionary measures in archival materials. I include the operation of an informal colour bar here as one way in which the nation defended boundaries. Other activities included public spectacle, public humiliation in shops and restaurants, surveillance and policing particularly of younger women's social activities, and a loss a security and protection by state agencies. A chorus of opposition aimed to restrict 'interracial interaction' by identifying 'no go areas', structures of power as white masculinity and the mobilisation of state apparatus to prevent boundary collapse. As a vociferous expression of disloyalty, white mothers attracted high levels of social ostracism and were shamed or denied access to everyday spaces that they had once enjoyed. Women no longer shared social spaces with long-standing friends and neighbours. The police, who were either unwilling or unable to take direct action, condoned collective acts of retribution. Likewise, they were often heard to be unofficially advising women of the dangers of interraciality. Women who proceeded to liaise with Black men were harassed, detained and questioned over seemingly insignificant acts. Women suffered a mounting onslaught of public disapproval including exclusionary practices. Abandonment was a strong theme invoked through archival documents where the outcome of race mixing was white mothers discarded by Black men and English Society.

Clearly, it is important to contextualise such accounts within a historical framework and specificity; yet we hear similar stories across the women's narratives. The fear of attack is what drove white mothers in 1940s Stepney to walk unaccompanied on the streets and deny their 'coloured boyfriends' before

meeting up with them in the coffee houses. This trend continued in the narratives resulting in a profound sense of public ownership or constricted private realm. In 2008, Beth is uncomfortable and unwelcome in her hometown amongst old friends and in familiar places. She leaves sensing *I don't belong here* despite this being her birthplace and home to her extended family. The collective do not own the colour problem, but locate it in the mixed race families they construct and imagine. Evidence to underpin this proposition includes confrontations between white mothers and black women in public spaces; white mothers and white youths on social housing estates; and the elderly through verbal altercations in public places.

Where professionals made the challenge, they implied a degree of authority that was considered particularly insidious. Penny describes one such instance of censure.

'The midwife, I could tell she was very racist, didn't like the idea that I had a Black partner or the fact that I had different coloured children. She actually asked me if they were all from the same partner particularly the last one. She kept saying she is very blond for a black child. I didn't bite. I said I was that colour when I was born. Fair enough but she doesn't look much like her dad. When she said that I thought I was hearing things why shouldn't she look like me she is mine as well. What a liberty I don't look like my brother or sister but no-one would dare ask my mum if we had the same dad.' (Lynda 40s)

Ashlie talked about a very similar instance of exposure,

'I had a horrible experience, actually really horrible, just after I had given birth, just literally 20 minutes after I had given birth, I was still lying naked on this delivery table, and this trainee midwife sort of stormed in through the door, and I was still quite drugged, but I remember her speaking very loudly to me, and Eugene, and she just kept saying we have to put down on the computer what race this child is, can you please explain to us what racial category this child is, and I just burst into tears, and was very upset, I don't know why she had to ask at that point, that really upset me' (Ashlie 20's)

Withholding Consent

A second powerful means of delivering sanctions against inappropriate behaviour was to withhold consent. In research on migrant status in urban communities, Blokland (2003) notes that maintaining social distance allows for higher levels of

tolerance across groups. Notable amongst contributors were high levels of absence at weddings and celebratory functions when ordinarily family members would be present. Of the women who talked about their wedding day, very few families were acknowledged as part of the celebration. Non-attendance avoided parents, grandparents, siblings or friends being confronted by their own prejudices. At one level, absence also avoided a sense of discomfort or disapproval on the day, but in many cases, a lack of authorial voice undermined the legitimacy of the relationship by withholding approval or endorsement. Beyond legal status, the mixed race marriage contract was emphasised as inauthentic using representations that continued to depict mixed race households as unnatural spaces lacking in commitment and stability. However, women sought to formalise relationships through marriage in order to signify a serious commitment, arguably one that confers a respectable status on a relationship.

Marriage has been theorised as a site of governance and I contend that contractual arrangements between a black man and white women incite anxiety as opposed to lessen it. I believe mixed marriage attracts high levels of social disapproval where they model deep attachments can be sustained beyond the collective. Harman (2009) reveals that lone parents and white mothers are at the crossroads of two disapproving discourses. I argue that permanency destabilises borders in ways that single parenthood does not, by imposing new sets of relations on the collective. One way to interpret this is to reflect on shifting power relations. Black males as household heads assume authority over white women, collapsing any notion of a racialised hierarchy and natural difference. Whereas to be alone could be considered a restorative act, an acknowledgement by white mothers of wrong doing by distancing themselves from the Black extended family. I contend evidence indicates that single parenthood often led to family reconciliation.

Brenda's experience resonates across interviewee's. When talking about her wedding in the 1960s, Brenda talks about the active choice she made to continue with the marriage although she would sacrifice her white family networks to do so.

'I asked my mum and dad but they said "no way", and umgh I sort of cut myself off from white people and my brother and sister because they didn't want to know me'. I had a couple of very good friends there on that day but that was it' (Brenda 70's)

Beth reflects on deteriorating family dynamics following her marriage in the 1990s. The timing of the marriage was a driver to enable her Caribbean partner to stay in the country, but the couple had already set up home together and had plans for future study before jointly going to America. Once married, Beth's status was renegotiated, but family relationships that had been open and accessible were now blocked. Beth is indicating the significant impact of marriage on family dynamics. I interpret this as a sanction.

Can you remember telling your dad that you were getting married?

'god yes, and he umg his initial reaction was shock, he said that he wanted me to wait and I said wait for what, and he said oh you know until we can do it properly and he was trying to in some way sort of (1sp) I think bribe me, so that saying that he would pay for a huge wedding, if I waited would stall for time or married someone else, (Laughing) so we just went off and got married by ourselves, just the two of us and two friends, and did it ourselves without anyone'

How did you respond to your dad after that it must have been difficult?

I am glad that I did it but I hadn't really thought about the fallout. We were married which made me feel stable but the loss of family ties just being able to ring when you want pop in you take it for granted yes it was difficult I ended up really depressed I went to the doctors.....(Beth 30's)

Unlike Brenda, Beth looks for pathways back in, not accepting a position of marginality. She becomes adept at reading moods and captures moments when meetings can take place. Equally, she has developed sufficient sensitivity to know when to withdraw. Christmas and birthdays are not the joyous family occasions they once were, but have developed into new traditions and rituals. Moreover, Beth's persistent boundary negotiation has had benefits. Relations with her sisters are strong and improving with her mother. Troy has been able to demonstrate to his mother-in-law that marriage meant more to him than residency. Despite being close, the father daughter relationship has not healed. In fact Troy and her father cannot occupy the same space. Beth is reduced to phone calls to check his wellbeing. What appeared to Beth a natural stepping stone was de-legitimised by the absence of key witnesses and subsequently framed as artificial. What should have passed as a happy event resulted in Beth seeking medical help for depression. Beth remains married after 11 years.

In Tracey's narrative absence of key witnesses at the wedding was used strategically to reclaim belongings. Tracey described her brief relationship as a blip weakening the validity of a failing marriage.

The marriage if you can call it that, I don't know what it was, I don't know what I was thinking about, it was, I don't know, not what I expected but I certainly didn't get it (laughter) but it wasn't like it was a real marriage, it was all a bit chaotic I was left sitting in this tiny room with loads of people crammed in and this fan going and pictures of the president on the wall, bonkers, none of my friends or family were even there we had a nice lunch on the beach though' (Tracey 40's)

Clearly, significant adults exercise censure where they choose to publicly withhold consent for a marriage. Social disapproval could be framed as a form of white resistance, a public expression of solidarity with the wider collective. However, in many cases an ongoing relationship, commonly with mothers, was privately maintained. Grandmothers operated as conduits and peacemakers between daughters and fathers.

Kath recalls her wedding day as an event that passed off as relatively unimportant, and certainly not one where she was the centre of attention. Beyond Didi and his sisters, the wedding happened in the absence of a single friend or white family member. I argue that Kath shares this to demonstrate her commitment to the relationship. Being cared for and respected was an extremely important anchor that offered Kath the opportunity to restructure personal boundaries after an abusive upbringing. Kath positions detachment from the collective as transformative, providing a fresh start and a new identity as wife. What Didi represented was a strong and masculine head of the household with an underlying sensitivity.

'Well in a way he kind of was like my dad (1sp) in some ways (1sp) I felt safe with him which you know is a really nice feeling I mean not all of the marriage was bad I mean he did really look after me in lots of ways which was great being looked after is a great feeling (Kath 30's)

Kath had a very tiny network of friends and Jen may have been the only one sufficiently interested in Kath's wellbeing to speak out. Where Jen is positioned as the sole critical voice, I believe Kath reads this as permissive.

'No, he didn't like the fact that I was with him, because, I think of the way they [Black men] treat their women and I think he didn't want to see it, I was a bit

naive to it, not all men are like that I know, but a huge amount are my friends were okay, I guess they did say I remember Jen saying to me you know he might not be able to stay in the country and what will you do then, she was the only one who really had any doubts, but I suppose I was so in love, I just thought, oh I'll go over there' (high pitched girly voice)' (Kath 30's)

Retrospectively Kath is undertaking boundary repair work against a failing marriage looking forward to a homecoming. To demonstrate a realignment of interest, Kath re-asserts white male authority, claiming her father is someone that was knowledgeable. Using her father's frame of reference, Kath questions the sacredness of racially mixed relationships, claiming Black men abuse and mistreat women. Kath generalises, believing this is culturally driven and common practice in a large number of relationships.

For Beth, Tracey and Kath, an additional pressure on the marriage was achieving residency for their partners. Regardless of whether this was common knowledge amongst their friendship groups or family, self-doubt undermined the legitimacy of the union.

Loss of Security & Protection

One consequence of moving beyond the collective is that white mothers were no longer afforded the protection of white society. Stories in the archive pointed out white women running from burning buildings screaming as onlookers watched. White women hauled up in court for petty misdemeanours. The police could not be counted on to intervene in racist incidents or in cases of domestic violence. In fact police harassment and the threat of criminal charges against women in mixed relationships was very real. Neighbours were known to report women on false charges rather than offer support in difficult times. Balibar (2006) states a growing confusion of the historical and political categories of 'stranger' and 'enemy'. This is important as it reflects a growing mood of 'New Racism', '*a need to purify the social body to preserve ones own or our identity from all forms of mixing, interbreeding or invasion*' (Balibar 1991a: 21 quoted in Kyriakides, et al 2009). Framed this way, white mother's edge ever closer to the status of an enemy. The direct link to my research is to question whether or, in what way, white mothering acts against national interests. If so, how do white mothers respond to that?

Where archives were silent, positionality may explain why some women still sought and demanded a relationship with state agencies to protect their children and still negotiated with agencies, most commonly schools, to foster good

relations or challenge inappropriate practice. Others reportedly felt disenfranchised sensing clear tensions when liaising with 'professionals' who positioned them as overly sensitive to racism or in denial about the reality of their status (Harman 2009). An important point is that often, white mothers were negotiating across cultural boundaries and did not necessarily gain support from the 'black community'. In effect, white mothers were disenfranchised as a source of knowledge about what was in the best interests of their children.

Racism

It is not at all surprising that without exception all interviewees discussed racism. Comparing transcripts over time, the nature of racist acts appeared to move from overt physical and verbal attack to more covert and subtle racisms. Arguably with the raft of equalities and race relations legislation making discrimination 'illegal' from the 1960s onwards this was to be expected. So, when Brenda talks of her experience in the late 1950s she discusses in detail a visit by her employers during a week's holiday to decorate her new flat and loosing her job once it became clear that she was living with her black husband. The assumption is that this could not happen now. In Rebecca's narrative in 2008, there is a story of sexual harassment in the workplace where she was persistently the butt of jokes grounded in an assumption that she had no sexual boundaries. Rebecca's daily encounters with work colleagues, including her supervisors, comprised being held to account and public spectacle for having a Black partner. Colleagues read her as without boundaries. In fact work colleagues in this case are complicit, de-sensitised to their role and impact. As previously discussed, those labelled transgressors cannot rely on the support of the public or state institutions for protection. Potentially, this is why Rebecca felt there would be no point in making a complaint and subsequently left to have a baby.

In analysing the material I did not include these two acts, or countless others, as extreme measures. They did not jump out as being particularly significant. I reflected on this for some time. Having spent hours engrossed in official documents and having interviewed many white mothers, I reacted with a sense of inevitability. The magnitude of these acts did not register where they had become commonplace and resonated with my expectation and experience. Potentially this is how the collective responds to white mothers, undermining the impact of racism as if it should have been anticipated. Carol indicates that for white single mothers this can be extremely distressing and worrying. There is not always a supportive voice and discussing racism with white professionals feels incongruent. Some mothers found it difficult to put on the agenda and others felt they were not taken seriously.

Jess had quite a few problems just because she was different. When she started school the kids called her gollywog, she didn't tell me for a while but I noticed she was chewing her fingernails and I thought there must be something wrong. So, I went to the school to talk to the teachers, although they can't do very much can they it's the parents but I said I needed to do something but they just didn't take me seriously' (Carol 40's)

A number of women talked of an uncomfortable sense of collusion, the counter position was to ignore or contest dominant practices and values. Some women were more resilient and better able to manage this than others. As insiders and outsiders white mothers are both in tune and immune to the pervasiveness of racism as an alienating force and do not always want to register the frequency with which this might happen.

Sofia gives an example of everyday racisms.

'I remember I was driving along in my Porsche and this motorbike guy tapped on the window and I thought he was going to say he liked my car or I had a brake light broken but he he'd pointed to Phillipa (child in car seat) and called me a dirty fucking spade lover and drove off and that really shocked me, if I had thought about it I would have taken his number and got him sacked, she was just a baby and what really upset me was if he did that when she was eight or nine years old (2sp) that would disturb me, that she was vulnerable (Sofia 50's)

In this moment of recognition Sofia does not accept limitations to belonging, sensing state institutions would still act to protect her and her child if she chose to demand her citizenship rights and force the state to respond to their moral obligations. Arguably, she does not see how she is read as a spoiled identity. I argue class privilege underpins Sofia's perspective on blackness, and prevents her from considering the challenge is levied at her white identity.

With so many instances of racism it was impossible not to include this as a dominant theme. Vron Ware's (1999) description of racism is of a multilayered physical outburst. This was the experience of white mothers. Racist instances would often be directed solely at white mothers, even if they were with partners, on public transport, in public spaces or directed at their children in state institutions and agencies. Beyond unprovoked direct attack, including physical and verbal abuse, institutional racism was also persistent. Subtle acts were often more insidious, they marginalised mixed children within social care, education

and employment systems (Prevatt Goldstein 1999, Tikly 2004). The literature infers that white mothers are ill equipped to manage racism or the affects on their children's emotional well being. Whilst women did acknowledge the particular form of racism encountered by their children was beyond their immediate experience, they also felt that they had the ability to identify and source appropriate support. In Lucy's case it was a black male.

'Yes yes but you've got to protect them haven't you well I'm straight up that school when Mica comes home and she's telling me things I go straight to the headmistress and I have it out there and then, (laughter) that's the best way, like hair braids being a fashion statement and they just associate everything with being black, like black is a fashion accessory, but its not, its what they do with their hair, if there are any problems at school I am right there saying what you do think you are doing, me and Leroy go together and they are definitely wary of him, when they used to see me I don't think they took me seriously but when Leroy comes with me, they do they are definitely edgy around him (Lucy 20's)

There were also extreme acts of racial intolerance and injustice. Kath's husband had died in custody after being arrested by an off duty police officer. Gina's partner had received a custodial sentence for his part in race riots. A grandfather was imprisoned as a radical for his role in challenging apartheid. Direct threats and physical intimidation by the BNP forced a lone mother to relocate. The full weight of the collective was brought to bear on transgressors who were forced to corroborate or suffer the consequences. Kath talked at length about her husband's death. Disbelief and anger resurfaced as his death continued to play out amongst extended family relationships. Blame, guilt, frustration and loss were a heady mix of emotions that rose to the surface. Without extensive discussion I found it difficult to analyse the material well enough to understand how racisms could be differentiated to such a degree between a white police force and white family members. Touching on the impact of his death on family networks, she says,

'possibly, possibly that will be really difficult (maintaining relationships with black family) well she has seen what his family are like, they don't like us, well they are racist basically, and my side of the family even though they are racist, they just love her to pieces (emphasis) I mean she's my daughter, and that's it, I mean, I know that I say that they are racist (my family) but I think its just the way that they've been brought up, I don't think that they actually would do anything to hurt her (Kath 30's)

Charging her black family with racism allows Kath to share space with her daughter. They are both positioned as unlikable and excluded from the black extended family. Kath acknowledged overt racism exists within her family, but this is a form of racism she presumes will melt away due to blood ties that bind families together. Yet her upbringing was troubled and abusive. Equally, she was vocal in accusing the white police force of a racially aggravated assault. These contradictions were difficult to reconcile. Potentially I could juxtapose the scale of familial racism, with the ultimate horror of state sanctioned violence against Black men. In this sense, to be immersed within a white family, however dysfunctional, appears to provide safety and invisibility as, beyond whiteness, there is limited protection and that scares Kath.

Harnessing such extreme measures in one or two sentences extracted from a wider narrative, pays scant regard to the emotional and psychological context within which racism occurs, but to eclipse racism from this chapter would also be an injustice. It is part of what being a white mother means but it requires sensitivity to the forms of racism that white mothers and their children or families are exposed to without collapsing into what Blokland (2003:3) has described a fairly homogenous picture of racism in inner cities. It is important to illustrate how white mothers are excluded as a potential site of knowledge.

Making the familiar Strange

In this last section I consider how familiarity can become strange and alienating indicating that nearness also magnifies difference. This marks a departure from the archival material by moving into new arenas for discussion. I draw on white networks, white brothers and investment in place as examples.

'I don't know if you have ever had that experience, where you either hear somebody say something, but we were at a party and a little boy kept shouting "where's the little black boy, where's the black boy?" and I suddenly thought "oh my god, he's talking about my son" – it was a really strange feeling.' (Clare 30's)

Role of white brothers

For a number of women, it was their white brothers that were a significant source of antagonism and in a number of cases continued to impact on family dynamics making social events, such as Christmas, weddings and Sunday visits, difficult. Women struggled to reconcile such divergent views within families.

'You don't, I never thought that my brother could feel uncomfortable with it, we were always so close, I am not sure why I didn't know, I don't think it every came

up for discussion and when Jason and I got together nothing much was said but contact started to ebb away, and it began to get strained, and it is hard for them not to, like when there is a family christening and you turn up with your Black partner and he [brother] wishes you hadn't come or you had come on your own I felt so awful hurt it was just different between us.' (Carol 40's)

As in this example negative reactions can come as a shock. Brothers are implicated in a form of multiculturalism they had not signed up for and one that challenges their fundamental beliefs.

Heather comments on her son's relationship with his mixed race half sister

'I didn't realise how bad it would be but my son was not happy about it at all and made it known to me he kept saying loads of stuff about black people all the time you know like they beat up their girlfriends and wives they sleep around he's embarrassed that his mum keeps going out with Africans and off to Jamaica and when he got a mixed race sister that put him in a really difficult place with his friends he was all over the place and treated us very badly' (Heather 60's)

Brothers exert a powerful influence on the household assuming the mantle of guardians of tradition, patrolling the activities of sisters that bring families into disrepute. Connectedness is used as a tool to censure and monitor sisters' actions and relationships. Even where white mothers had re-established relationships with parents, family visits often had to be highly structured and time managed to avoid embarrassment or confrontation. It was easier for white mothers to visit without partners. Sometimes, older relatives were caught in the crossfire, severing relationships with daughters at the behest of their sons, or defending daughters and alienating other family members. Veronica talks about her experience in the 1970s.

'It's a bit of a scandal I was more worried about me brothers finding out than anything else I mean particularly the middle one he's got such a temper and he used to say all the time oh fucking black bastards piss off home we definitely knew our parents were racist I don't think it was from where we was living it was just because anyone that wasn't white wasn't welcome and he was very spiteful It was an unwritten rule you know as long as you didn't cross the line and have a relationship with them that was okay as long as they lived by our rules that was okay.' (Veronica 50's)

Sam talks about a similar set of circumstances in the 1990s

'yes it was really bad one of my brothers he hated it I have got three brothers and one of them didn't like it at all that I had a black boyfriend my boyfriend knew what we was like but I took him round my house when I was seven months pregnant and there was a massive fight and we got chucked out my dad said didn't even want to see him again [my boyfriend] he was like I don't even want to look at him it makes me sick and I kept saying what's the problem what's the problem this is still going to be your grandchild no matter what colour it is and he had a problem with the black thing why I don't know I tried to ask him t tried and like ohhhhhhhh he cant actually say its just black they just don't like it' (Sam 30's)

Ten years on again Taz offers a similar account where she says

'I was worried because I thought they would be angry it wasn't my mum it was my brothers I don't know because of their reputation really until you get to know them its hard to tell its just different they are different its hard to explain its like they say oh Black men they just hit you this and that Black men treat you bad Black men beat you and hit you around and stuff like that they don't respect you I was more scared of my brothers then like anything else like when I was growing up and like they would say to me all the time don't go out with a black man and if I find out you go out with Black men ill do this ill do that in it ... One night when we was out and my brothers saw me they kicked out the lights on his car smashed it up (huge intake of breath) Taz (20's)

The threat of violence and brutality erupts between white and Black men where brothers sense a sister may have been mistreated or that family reputations are on the line. The fallout was identified as impacting on extended family members in ways that forced a violent response. Understanding brothers' motivations and relationship to 'multiculturalism' has not received attention. Yet, reading these excerpts is chilling as it revealed a strong undercurrent of latent hostility that could erupt at any time. It was clear that white women could not call on unconditional support that ordinarily, families would provide. Likewise, there was no guarantee of state protection in the form of the police intervention. The contingency of white mothers' family networks was exposed, where belonging could be challenged at any time. Returning to Veronica's extract demonstrates her use of 'our rules' to firmly locate herself within the collective and her focus on her brothers points to the irreducible ties of kin. In her schema white males continue to exercise authority. A position that Veronica strangely loathes admires and understands as an essential component of urban life. It is brothers

who impose and dictate friendship groups particularly within the younger cohort of interviewees.

Taz shared a story about how her family intrudes on her relationship. Her brother imposes presence where he exercises a version of white, English, working class masculinity. When Dale tries to retaliate she quickly takes her brother's side.

'Daniel was causing so much trouble for us and that he (partner) was threatening to beat my brother up and granted my brother can handle himself but I said to him Dale if you touch him you can forget about seeing your daughter that's her uncle that's her family'
(Rebecca 20s)

It is notable that in each instance it is the brother that is most aggressive (hence possessing the most male traits) that attempts to restore order and uses gender relations as a mode of enforcement. These examples occurred within metropolitan cities, which challenges the assumption that areas with high levels of migrant communities provide a safer space for mixed families. Mixed relationships remain highly visible regardless of context.

Relationship to Place

Area based approaches to social investigation were a prominent feature of archival research. As argued elsewhere, these locations historically had been considered bastions of the working classes, communities that became less visible as areas were increasingly racialised. The growth of 'coloured quarters' became a focus for intense speculation. Constructions of dangerous and eroticised places had significance to white mothers who found themselves living in these areas and were subsequently subsumed within a sexualised and racialised discourse. How did women respond to this? Massey (1994) talks about place as a zone that reflects back and reinforces social relations including gender. Again, the archives are not able to answer this, whereas narratives can begin to explain movement as a response to strangeness. This may be why some white mothers move out of cities to find anonymity in the suburbs, and others move in for the same reason.

When Brenda eventually left home [London] for what she thought would be a better life in the shires, she was hopeful that a move would safeguard her children from harassment in the local neighbourhood, objectification in schools, or police scrutiny. In this instance, I believe Brenda senses that to retreat into a less urban space will safeguard her family. Brenda seems to suggest that less crime, less racism and better quality housing are available elsewhere. This is

reminiscent of archival materials claiming that better quality versions of Englishness existed beyond the ports. Arguably, Brenda does not sense her own marginality, although is conscious that her relationship caused a stir in the local area. Rather than accept a degraded status, Brenda believes whiteness will operate as a protective shield. Brenda appears to search out new spaces of anonymity where she is concerned that the collective will mark her children as troubled and vulnerable.

Frank "I am getting out of London I am not bringing my children up in London". D will wound up in jail. People are knocking on my door and saying D's doing this and that" and I'd said "what was he doing, "well he was just kicking his football down the road", D could fight back and he was getting called really nasty names and was beginning to get a bit aggressive and I said to Frank "he will wind up in jail if I don't get him out of London". Brenda (70's)

Taz, at 17, had only recently become a mother and was one of the youngest of the contributors, concluding over fifty years of 'white mothering' experience.

'I'm hoping to get housed off the estate its horrible the other day this boy started rapping around me N-I-G-G-A and then I was surrounded by these young lads and it was scary, although when I was growing up [here] it was just loads of people really all up the park just loads of people really I wasn't looking for a black person it just happened' (Taz sub 20s)

In this account there is similar experience of marginalisation from groups Taz formerly shared space with. Transformed local social relations are jolted by the erection of firm borders around friendship and peer groups. Rejection comes as a shock. Taz's border interaction is not transformational but reaffirms borderlines that now exclude her. The familiar and everyday now seems strangely disconnected. We might argue that location disturbs belongings; suggesting place and class interact with ethnicity in particular ways. By adding context to Beth's narrative, the complexity of social relations can manifest. Beth has moved from the North of England to what she considers cosmopolitan London. Likewise she now has a career as an academic. Beth and her partner are more comfortable in intellectually stimulating spaces as opposed to a local pub, and may have experienced social discord on account of transformed social relations and social mobility.

'when we left London, I took him home, I don't know if you do the family thing, but when we went home at Christmas and I went to some old haunts, some of the

old pubs that we [friendship group] used to go to, as teenagers, and I remember feeling very conscious, I remember thinking this feels strange, and everybody was looking at us, and you know, sort of blond haired blue eyed girls in the corner sort of whispering about us, things like that yes, yes, I remember thinking umgh I don't like this, I think we should go home' (Beth 30's)

Beth's feelings of disorientation are articulated as categorical rather than ambiguous spaces. A stark contrast is drawn between how Beth reads the very white girls – the blond haired blue-eyed girls and her current position as the partner of a black man. A number of oppositional categories are juxtaposed: white and non-white, north and south, homeliness and strangeness. Beth reminisces, making reference to home, but her experience of home re-orientates her gaze when she senses increasing dissimilarity. Home, as was, is inaccessible and Beth feels threatened and unsafe in spaces that were once familiar. Sensing a shift in location Beth repositions belonging and home in London, a space that allows her to revision belongings due ethnic, faith and sexually diverse relationships. These are symbols that Beth reads as an indication of a progressive and liberal mind-set. Beth does not acknowledge the possibility that it is her networks that offer a particular vantage point but relates strangeness to place.

Liz offers a middle class view:

'I would rather there was more black people living here than there are as it is a predominantly white place and it has been that way, families move out [of London] just purely for the fact that, I like living in a multi racial place and I feel happier surrounded by different cultures, I think it is more interesting, I'd love to be in London but the reason we moved out was because of the gangs and the guns and knife crime, it wasn't that we lived in a predominantly black area sort of thing and when we first moved here [my daughter] was thinking where are all the black people and was shocked and couldn't believe it you know just driving through it you know everything so it has been an issue for her she has missed people' (Liz 30's)

This statement shows the potential for movement to have a differential impact on family members and it is unclear whose interest takes precedence. Liz moves away from London to reduce the risk of crime. In the space she now occupies, she conflates safety with middle classness and whiteness, but also identifies this as a sterile space lacking in interest. What Liz wants is a combination of elements she sees to be beneficial. A shared space inhabited by like-minded

families, but ones that inscribe the suburbs with appeal. Townsville is predominantly white and middle class, but this is a space she can operate from, opening up pathways for her daughter that she was unable to do in London. Liz still has many contacts through her parents' business, school colleagues and friends. Whilst London was enjoyed for its multiculturalism, Liz wants to return home where she senses there are better opportunities for her family. Liz feels confident that her daughter will be treated well due to her personal contacts. Liz asserts middle class status that had remained dormant in London. Established connections were used to inscribe place with familial belongings that demonstrate a legitimacy to belong.

Although Liz sees the move as beneficial, her daughter inscribes home with emptiness, longing for different meanings to redress a sense of isolation and marginality. Withdrawal into whiteness requires a trade off with unknown consequences.

For Lynda, the move from an inner city to middle class suburbs where she is surrounded by families of difference in a small cul-de-sac of 6 houses is a positive trade off.

'When I moved here I didn't really think about it, here I would say that the colour of your skin doesn't matter, it's the colour of your money that counts, if you don't have money you couldn't live here' (Lynda 40's)

I interpret this extract to mean that within a middle class area, status and aspiration were more important than racial difference. Class appears to mediate ethnic differences in ways that suggest the potential for differential experiences in urban, suburban or rural areas, dependent on class status and networks. An important area for research to explore is how space is constructed as raced or non-raced by white mothers, examining in detail why white mothers choose to live in certain areas and how their experience is shaped by that. It has not been possible to attend to this in any degree of detail.

Rebecca also managed strangeness by moving. She met her Kenyan husband at a British university through the church. Both settings offered conciliation, consensus building, challenge and co-operation. Once in Kenya, Mark appeared a very different person who Rebecca did not recognise. Mark was read as Kenyan, a way of being that she was unfamiliar with and found difficult to understand. I argue what Rebecca experienced were gendered articulations of power and domination at odds with her own cultural value base. In Kenya

women's role was fairly prescribed, and within the interior space of Kenya borderlands, did not offer Rebecca freedoms she had taken for granted. Unlike Tracey, Rebecca did not see these differences as insurmountable, but talks about homecomings, believing that once back in England the relationship would re-establish itself along more familiar lines.

Tracey discussed homecoming to reveal strangeness.

'I had had one or two Gambian partners over the years and so one of the things that automatically became quite attractive about him was bizarrely his Englishness, because I didn't have to explain myself to him, if you are using quirkynisms, like in your face, or whatever, he knew what I meant, whereas the Gambian partners didn't and so that was really familiar and in fact I'm not even sure that I thought of him as anything other than very English until I came back to this country, and there I never became aware of the fact that he was black not that I didn't know he was black if you know what I mean' (Tracey 40's)

Tracey struggles with acknowledging that David articulates a version of Englishness that is incongruent. Culturally David is English, but visibly he is black. Where both perform as 'tourists' amongst more extreme sites of difference, David's blackness takes on a familiar hue of Englishness. What was attractive about David was similarity, his very English identity in comparison with black Gambian men. In fact, operating out of context liberates Tracey's Englishness. Tracey experiences this as no longer needing to explain jokes and colloquialisms to make her understood. David validates a version of Englishness that she was unable to perform with local Gambian men and Tracey is able to re-inscribe Englishness on boundary spaces. In my opinion, this is achieved by performing gendered relations that re-establish connectedness. In this sense, nationality becomes an overarching framework for disparate belongings. Tracey goes on to claim that once back in England, visible difference became acute. David was no longer English in England, but Black British, a version of Englishness that was unfamiliar and strange and ultimately proved incompatible. What was shared in the Gambia in terms of English language, music, humour and history, was re-positioned as culturally incompatible.

Summary

I began with a proposition that interracial relationships are a deficit model of last resort, bearing none of the signs of consensual and informed decisions between partners of equal standing. In addition, I stressed that nominal interest in mixed households beyond area based studies of racialised enclaves within urban areas.

This has distorted our understanding by failing to listen to women's voices. Whilst accounts remain obscure, a shadow is cast over all interracial relationships in terms of the quality and viability of partnerships to be anything other than shallow and fleeting. Running alongside is a powerful discourse of social disapproval, an influential and longstanding critique of white mothers' ability to parent a 'black child'. Social and professional attitudes to transracial adoption remain controversial and contested. At the heart of this politicised debate is a theory of attachment, identity and culture that has far reaching implications for white birth mothers that has not been fully considered. The value of archival research was to consider the evidence that informed those debates.

Understanding the mixed race experience needs to examine class difference in order to shake up the pathology of mixed race (Rich 2004). However, I began this chapter by taking up the premise that white mothers are spoiled identities in marginal spaces. I take up a subject position within that discourse, and then as a researcher, try to ask questions of it. Feminist theorisation, I believe adds legitimacy to this approach, not only in terms of reflexive practice, on a more substantive point, where women are identified at the limit lines by virtue of gender. Yet, a more sinister positioning occurs in claims that interracial intimacy leads to a degradation of Englishness, a particular version of whiteness that was so often articulated in archival materials. White mothering was considered an expression of betrayal and decay, to be detached from core values. I proposed belonging has been challenged on a number of levels.

The value of narrative research has been to deconstruct the trope of a particular type of woman in ways that archival research was unable to. Narrative accounts by thirty white women seen to appropriate 'other' through emotionally and sexually intimate acts, challenge any concept of similarity through a complex web of the dissimilarities they demonstrate. These are highly gendered accounts in that it was white women labelling Black men. It was clear from these accounts that a more sophisticated relationship to boundary architecture was possible and there was potential to span a range of border dimensions. Interior spaces at the frontline, marginal and externalised border locations at the periphery and sites of reconstruction in borderlands. How women shaped and imagined the nation then determined the boundary position they occupied. One possibility is that racialised and sexualised referents of other construct a version of racial difference that has a material quality and reality. For some this may underpin the notion of transgression being a physical movement between spaces leaving behind what was before. I used dimensions of dislocation and vulnerability, as concepts to trace the contours of the unfamiliar, by examining how contemporary

white mothers respond to a model of movement that propels them into unmarked zones.

Rather than recede in interest, interracial sex has remained a social taboo, drawing consistent levels of public and official attention to racialised areas through high visibility. Arguably in historical materials the impact on whiteness was unsettling, made more complex by confusing symbols, which makes marginality or inclusion difficult to sustain. Within the narratives mothers talked of the ways in which whiteness made them both visible and ghostlike. When alone white mothers were read as insider members, when accompanied by children or partners they marked out the limitations to whiteness. Borderlines attempt to marginalise white mothers from 'mainstream' white society and within black British communities, such that they have no legitimate claim to place. They are stripped of rights. I have argued that women seen to cross racialised and gendered boundaries were considered politically, morally and sexually dangerous.

I began to explore contexts where women came under scrutiny. I explored how white mothers interact at border posts, with border guards and the type of movements they make in boundary positions. I have focused on barriers to sustaining networks and undertaking everyday activities once women were known to have a Black partner including isolation, social ostracism and avoidance. Spaces that were once familiar now felt exclusionary and relationships were strained. I argued this was executed purposefully to hail a change in credibility and status. In considering border occupation, I was able to demonstrate the ways in which meaning is constructed and shaped by women marked as different and marginal. The constraints and benefits of this location, for those who entered consensual intimate relations with 'other' and the impact on mobility, differed in terms of the resources that women possessed to enable freedom to move. What remains problematical is negotiating belonging in relation to a wider collective, where membership criteria are tacitly understood, but imagined as unambiguously distinct. This question is explored in the following chapter where women are repositioned as insiders at interior border posts.

Chapter 6: Resisting Displacement, Insiders, Limit Lines and Border Dilemmas

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I tried to move seamlessly between historical conditions and contemporary accounts of white mothering. Patterns in the discourse, extracted from official language and expert opinion, routinely positioned white mothers as marginal members of the collective. As a result, all white mothers occupied peripheral locations, detached from core values and distinguished from other group members as 'sexual transgressors'. I believe those ideas were misplaced but validated as socially meaningful, in and through collective actions including social ostracism and disapproval. Individual biographies were largely overlooked, in favour of a simple four-dimensional typology of white mothers. This ill-conceived framework categorised white mothers in ways that produced inconsistencies and contingencies that were then difficult to manage (Tabili 2005). I argued that class privilege produced a particularly problematic reading of white mothers, a perspective that was brushed under the archivist's mythmaking carpet. The 'facts' that propelled white mothering into a public arena conveyed a sense of authority, integrity and general distaste for 'other'.

In this chapter, I continue the practice of placing private experiences in a public realm to discuss white mothering as a metaphor for fragmented belongings. However, I challenge this interpretation, particularly the positioning of white mothers as outsiders, claiming knowledge about this 'group' represents a partial account. Discursive representations are disparaging of white mothering, yet draw from a particular combination of racial, sexual and classed relations that are themselves contested sites. Likewise, sexually intimate relations with Black men do not represent a cohesive group of interests. Jones' (2005:94) research is helpful here in taking us beyond a framework of majority/minority relations of difference. Collectives riddled with internal conflict suggest there are no coherent internal/external borders marking out limit lines. Herein lies the tension, without a clear and consistent set of signifiers, how is nation recognised, bounded and sustained.

Fitch (quoted in Stoler 2005:199) highlighted two dilemmas, both have direct relevance to this thesis: purity is prone to penetration at interior and exterior borders; and the essence of community is intangible, attitudinal and a multiplicity of invisible ties. I suggest that with such fragile foundations, the denial of difference is central to nation building, but that magnification of difference is

absolutely essential to the production and classification of 'other' (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, Jones 2005, Stoler 2009). The allure of exclusivity, power and resource is a persuasive and mobilising force. Any deviation from that blueprint would need to be extremely well managed and communicated to avoid revealing Balibar's (1996) fictive nation as a fictional construct. Anthias & Yuval Davis (1989) argue that gendered bodies and practices are crucial tools in terms of nation building, through stewardship of access paths constraining movement. The nation hangs on the assumption that what is guarded is non contestable or goes unchallenged.

Understanding the conditions that lead to white mothers 'outing' is an important development in examining what I see as the administration of belongings. Arguably, the 'Trojan Horse' is a useful metaphor, where white mothering represents an unreliable and untrustworthy source at the point at which Englishness is at its most vulnerable. At the same time, white mothers obscure such clarity. Invisible ties characterised by tacitly understood obligations and commitments endure, if not uncomfortably, beyond the birth of a mixed race child. I argue these markers transmit across generations' an unspoken legitimacy and authenticity to belong that is difficult to dismantle. Symbolic referents reveal the ways in which understandings and embodiment of nation: culturally determined gendered relations (Mills 2007) birth right (Blee 1991), and whiteness (Bonnett 2000, Ferber 1998, Frankenberg 1994) draw distinctions between diverse and contested belongings. These markers figured prominently in archival sources as elements of 'our' particular national myth and claim of authenticity. Likewise, it was evident within the narratives that individuals deployed these markers to shape, unblock and transform belongings.

I argue the notion of transcending and transforming belongings has not been applied as an analytical concept. By doing so, I re-claim white mothers rites of passage as interior members who deviate from tradition, but in ways that open up new pathways and landscapes. I consider white mothers as pioneers, those who might consider the out of the ordinary is possible. By using this approach, I am able to disrupt the dominant narrative of dislocated relations. I re-read the narratives situating white mothers as immovable insiders and continue to develop this framework to demonstrate the conjoined status of nation and 'other'. I claim that enduring connections and 'qualifying' membership criteria shield women against marginalisation. In fact, they use insider resources to resist the subject position of a spoiled and degraded identity, to reconnect and repair borderlines that appear detached.

The Strength of Invisible Ties

Following on in the footsteps of Stoler's (2001) thesis on the production of colonial categories, the management of sexual arrangements is implicit in the production of nations. Across a number of domains, household arrangements, education, sexual relations and motherhood offer sites for intense scrutiny. Any evidence of national disjuncture supports the production of 'other'. The point Stoler (2001:8) makes is identifying, '*what made those connections at once so pertinent and consequential and invisible and effaced*'. The concept of 'invisible ties' is useful to unearth complex and significant bonds. I came to see white mothers anchored within the collective through a myriad of invisible ties, emotional bonds and kinship that are difficult to disentangle (Conklin 2005). I use these to counter a predictable response to visible difference, and to challenge simple descriptors as the primary axis on which the nation rests. As Mills (2007) claims, the bodies and practices of women are open to debate. This might suggest, that what happens in the privacy of mixed race household is of national concern and social significance. Blee (1991:112) develops this point in claiming that familial concerns are also sites of carefully constructed political governance.

Herein lies a second dilemma, white mothering models boundary management in ways that uphold collective values using logical terms of reference in contradictory ways. Balibar (2006) is helpful here where he provides a framework to think about frontiers as a site of closure and contact. I read into this a suggestion that endings and beginnings operate from the same space. I place white mothering at the core of this creative space conjoined with nation, conjoined with other. This moves ever closer to the notion of continuum, flat lining racial hierarchy as a model of nation building. I propose to strengthen this proposition by exploring invisible ties secured through place, white familial relationships and Englishness in further detail.

Gendered Constructions of Place

We should not assume how white mothers interact with borderlines, but understand their relationship to boundary architecture as a complex process of consensus building, authentication and endorsement. Belongings are produced through social and spatial practices (Knowles 2005:91). I am concerned with examining how the nation is produced, using this to connect everyday experience within individual households to racialised structures of governance. In the previous chapter, transgressive white women were cast out, an act of separation. In this chapter, I challenge the view that white mothers have 'crossed over' suggesting they remain anchored within the collective. I also offer a third

location, dependent upon the degree of agency white mothers exercise and the emotional, cultural and social investment they are willing to make in the production of that space.

By paying attention to what was presented in the narratives boundary negotiation was considered through small or big acts. Actions were performed through strategic alliances, formed by white mothers collusive behaviours or boundary contestation. White mothers claimed insider status where this conveyed advantage and outsider status if this allowed women to develop new opportunities and possibilities for their children. The success of any given outcome depended on the benefits that white mothers considered 'difference' conveyed to children and the resources they had to negotiate that. I conclude from my findings that homespace provided an opportunity for mixedness flourished.

'I took the boys to a record shop in Croydon and another black boy came up and he gave Reece like a black salute thing and I said oh who was that and Reece wouldn't tell me, and I did for a moment think I belonged to a different group, but then the man thing, I have noticed that as well, the theme tune for Match of the Day comes on and three heads turn like this (gestures)... there is a lot in the media about black children under-performing, so I think the more they know about black culture and having positive role models the better, so I remember when Tim was very young and I was looking through the paper and I said oh look there is Tiger Woods he's the best golfer in the world and he's mixed race like you and Tim just said yay yah so they were pleased' (Melissa 30's)

As Melissa points out, small acts might include active choices over food, music, fashion and literature spanning a range of cultures. Strategies to promote positive role models favoured those of mixed heritage, regardless of ethnic composition. Traditional names to indicate African or British ethnic alliances were not necessarily used in ways that systematically conform or uphold symbols of a predefined community. Electing *Ama*, as a preference as opposed to the traditional practice of being born on Thursday is one example. Other investments include extended trips to Africa and the Caribbean, but not necessarily to relatives or specific countries that families have connections with. Sonia gives an example of small acts that reflect personal advancement.

'He is very good at sport and Ireland is sports mad they do a lot of sports in schools in Ireland and he might fit in just absolutely you know we do Gaelic sports in Ireland and In Cork, Cork are the All Ireland Champions in hurling and

football, Cork is a very sporty place and the captain of the Cork team is mixed race himself he's got a completely Irish name he speaks fluent Irish and whenever he is collecting a trophy he will always give his acceptance speech in Irish not in English and he is mixed race and he is a very popular sports person in Ireland, so he is more Irish than the Irish themselves s to speakbut he's been very successful and he's very well known gets all these sponsorship deals maybe that's being mixed race well he's very striking' (Sonia 40s)

Despite not growing up in Ireland, speaking the language, or playing Gaelic football, Sonia believes opportunities are there to be exploited, if chosen. In common with others, mothers do not deny the potential for barriers, but work to exemplify how they are overcome. I would argue that in almost all cases, white mothers did not accept limitations but embraced sites of difference as occupying a degree of cultural cache, potential opportunities and real benefits that may change over a life course.

In other cases, I identified substantial acts. Early in the 1970s, Gina and Delphine narrate sustained involvement in high profile race relations transitioning from 'unraced whiteness' into racialised zones. Both women are retired graduates who met their partners through political activities and campaigning. Gina's narrative shares stories of her upbringing in an aspirational white Catholic household in the North of England. In her own words she moved from the slow moving ethos of a Christian concern with inequalities and church work that 'was just plodding along', to complete immersion in the rapid development of a successful politicised black community project that was active in 1970s South West London. Gina maps out the pathway she followed that led her to that place.

'Jonathon (Black Power movement) came to talk about Black power, and it went on from there, I went to East Africa as a result for 2 years, friends started a volunteer project, and I had read all this stuff about developing countries, and South Africa was a last bastion of enshrined white supremacy, as, this was just after the Civil Rights Wars, had finished in the United States, so segregation had been abolished and South Africa was the last, and there was the Vietnam War and Martin Luther king, it was a very heady time I had seen, coming from the North of England and a Catholic background I had not seen nothing like it I came from a comfortable teacher household, where education was always there and you automatically went to university..... I did find the whole area of sexual relations very difficult (Gina 60s)

Pioneers, by definition explore the potential for new pathways to open. In understanding whether this challenges border integrity we need to plot the journey taken. Gina was 'caught up' with the idea as she says, '*of changing the world*', influenced by the high profile and charismatic leaders she was exposed to. She engaged in a collaborative approach with an international political community that stimulated a worldwide movement for change. Within this context, I understand a claim to ordinariness. Gina's involvement replicated what others were doing but placed her in the forefront of the British context. What that meant within urban areas of Britain was still under construction. But for Gina, actions formed a cornerstone of an emergent black community politics and a growth in the local 'West Indian' community.

'The project kind of took off from 1975 and over the course of, that year we managed to raise funds in excess of ¼ million pounds, my French came in very handy, we got premises under the Westway so it was all tied up with literally, the fabric of West London, as you know, we got the rental of that premises, I remember, I mean it was such an emotional investment as well and I remember all of that, we had a committee, a project committee, it was all very complex and our first baby was due, and it took a while to get our first grant, and we certainly did good work with it, helping Black men find accommodation and employment'
Gina (70's)

The narrative points to a co-construction of place with complex and challenging acts of boundary resistance and construction. Working together, Gina and her husband conceived of a community project, petitioned for grants from local and national authorities, assisted with local employment and housing strategies, liaised with state institutions and established a community building. The fight to secure equality for a wider collective consumed and directed much of the relationship. Gina initially indicates a complimentary position where each draws out and from the strengths of other. Gina used her insider status, hence familiarity, to navigate these more easily. Grant funding, loans, premises and business contacts were all more accessible. I argue that during this period Gina is located within a space of mixedness. What is different lies beyond in the narrow confines of an English bureaucracy disengaged from world politics or an unknown Jamaica.

As the project grew, boundary interaction was often unpredictable and unstable. Gina found herself working with and simultaneously against boundaries that had once appeared as frontiers. Boundaries became stretched and pulled in a multiplicity of ways until it became difficult to sustain a path through. Gina

acknowledged these difficulties as reaching a point of boundary collapse. However, it was not racial or ethnic difference that Gina talks about, but the inability to place boundaries around public and private spaces. Community spilled over into intimate and private space to such a degree that work and home became indistinguishable. Project management, married life and motherhood overwhelm Gina. Likewise, her husband is unable to negotiate whiteness, meaning the infrastructural arrangements that mixedness relied on and both retreat into insular spaces.

Delphine also transitioned from a colour blind home, to an acute arena of intense racial segregation when during Apartheid, she visited the notorious Robben Island. I argued this was of huge significance given the socio political context at that time. However, Delphine's narrative is also peppered with understated indifference, persistently pointing to the normality of the everyday that underpinned a racially mixed household. It was rare for white family members to have openly discussed politicised racialised views before the relationship and/or pregnancy, or in other cases was clearly antagonistic and anticipated. So, in a great many cases despite family discord the assumption was of settled family relations and family members that would eventually come round. Talking about how her white family responded she says:

'I mean we are a family that never says anything about anything or anybody but I mean they were probably uneasy about it, but they never showed it, and they welcomed him, and they welcomed my son and so on' (Delphine 60's)

In reflecting over her life, Delphine was adamant her relationship was nothing out of the ordinary, merely reflected the social circles that she moved in at the time. Throughout the interview, Delphine narrates practical decision making and rational long term planning. This was a difficult interview and that may have contributed to my interpretations. Emotional issues were shielded from scrutiny and dismissed as drivers for the relationship. Emotion was also an irrational justification for being in Africa. In the following extract where she states *I don't feel...* she momentarily taps into feelings which underpin her decision to return to England.

'well at a sort of rational level I felt more (1sp) I missed my mates when we were abroad and it felt very difficult to be part of a society like that umgh so at a rational level, I mean this was a long term project and would be plan, I mean we are talking about the 70s, god knows when South Africa if ever was going to change, so we were talking at that point about umgh yes what oh Zambia was

going to be the next stop I think and I just couldn't (1sp) I don't feel at ease, here you are an outsider you don't really fit and you know that was the rational level that was at that level' (Delphine 60s)

Not unlike Gowan (2006), I reconsider movement as direction of travel, with women marking outward journeying or homecomings. Delphine yearns to reclaim connections that being an outsider in Africa she finds difficult to access. In her opinion the satisfaction she craves from familial and peer attachments outweighs the investment she is willing to make in political process. Once she is back in England a further rational decision is made. The intimate connections that Delphine had recognised as personally important, were now considered essential for her son. She journeys to South Africa to foster familial connections that span continents, gendered, racialised, legal and political ideologies. The place of visible difference here is ambiguous, potentially unimportant beyond the significant political barriers ahead of her. The force that drives Delphine to open up new possibilities is the need to sustain invisible ties between a grandfather in South Africa and a grandson living in England. I suggested visiting Robben Island was a huge decision.

'It wasn't a huge decision, that's the wrong thing to say, it was a huge event that happened, I sat on the flight thinking I don't believe this, I still don't believe it actually (asp)... they must have thought, a white woman coming over here visiting the Island, this is making history, which it was I suppose, in its way, it could be seen that way, you know a white woman coming over, but I knew it was important' (Delphine 60s)

The critique of white mothering has led to an assumption that they behave as demolitionists, destroying historic and cultural associations. Delphine demonstrates that transition to motherhood marked a decline in political activity and that rootedness and belongings were of primary importance. Delphine later acknowledged the importance of that contact for her son and that earlier in her life she had perhaps under-estimated the need for this sort of boundary negotiation. Conceptually, pioneer links outward journeying from a central core to sites of difference. Yet, as interior architects the positioning of either of those dimensions is open to challenge subject to the constellation of attachments that white mothers make and sustain. This lifestyle was rarely re-presented as a disorientating choice. In detailing the ordinariness of their actions women stressed ease in deploying existing skills to navigate across new spaces. Past sureties formed the foundations on which to build new access routes and advantage.

In the following extract, I identified invisible ties at work shaping and racialising space. In common with many of the women, Tracey reflects on the mechanics of labour and childbirth. I interpret the maternity suite as a place for new beginnings, a physical location that marked entry into the world. Childbirth also represented departure and change most notably a shift in social role. I argue that Tracey tries to hang onto her identity as daughter by performing a particular set of behaviours. She gives authority to her father to determine how the relationship will progress. Tracey had grown up in the East End of London with her father and step family having lost her mother at the age of 13. She met her black British born Caribbean partner in the Gambia and returned to England to pursue a relationship with him. Once home Tracey quickly became pregnant, a permanent shift in relations that was a significant challenge for all parties. Distance had allowed father and daughter to tolerate behaviours they did not feel comfortable with. Post labour, Tracey was anxious that if father and partner arrived at the hospital to visit at the same time there would be a scene. In this moment family connections were revealed as far more significant than Tracey had been anticipated.

'I was really pleased, I mean I am an only child, and my mum is not alive, I was really pleased, but really panicky because Michael was due as well at the same time. I didn't want there to be a scene at the hospital, I remember my Dad saying "so what's his name then?" and I said "Nathan", no I didn't I said "oh I don't know we haven't decided on a name, we thought of one but I can't remember what it was it was while I was giving birth. And he said "oh I hope it isn't going to be some ridiculous black name" (laughs). Um, and then I remember my Dad picking him up and saying "oh actually it's not that bad, he's not that black, you could pretend to people he's white" (laughs). And I said "but he's got a black Father, why would I want to pretend he's white?" and that was that really. Um, but luckily they didn't meet each other in the hospital because Michael was 3 hours late as always. (Tracey 40's)

Deeper questions about male authority, the flexibility of gendered boundaries and value systems emerge. I argue women's ability to inscribe place with traditional and new meanings has the potential to refashion belongings and this allows father and partner to identify belongings in different ways from a single site. That there are possibilities, means place can be read in a number of ways dependent on which signifiers are articulated. I argue this creates the opening for white mothers agency to craft the contours of that framework. Tracey does this by creating pathways that respond and direct her father to inscribe belongings on

the new baby and to read those in different ways. Tracey begins by placing emphasis on family structure as an exclusive and hierarchical system. I argue she uses biological constructions of belonging to override any fallout from racial difference. There is an opportunity for an authorial voice to consent to group membership, dependent on the symbols he reads and recognises but that she has negotiated and mapped out as significant.

Naming systems appear important in indicating whose group identity the baby shares. Tracey suggests this has yet to be decided. I argue this is strategic, a blurring of signification to avoid alienating her father and to tease out possibilities. She provides the opportunity for a new name to be offered. I suggest this tests if foundations are secure or border openings are contingent on initiation rights. Where the baby's physical appearance is ambiguously marked there is a real possibility that the relationship between Englishness and whiteness will remain under-articulated. Tracey identifies that in this moment she can potentially re-negotiate the terms of reference to facilitate Nathan's belonging. I mean by this, enabling rites of passage if there is a demonstration of Tracey's commitment to the collective. In this case belonging is claimed through a white working class identity. Being born in the East End with a strong sense of commitment to place, local family values and white male authority, anchor belonging through a particular version of Englishness.

I would argue that restorative acts include devaluing blackness, in this case 'black names', separating from a Black partner, sustaining limited contact or involvement with the black extended family, lone parenthood, and assigning lead authority to the white household. These may symbolise collusive acts. I maintain, once these term of reference are observed, Tracey's father takes the lead in negotiating a return journey. Tracey's panic points to contestations of male authority if white father and Black partner occupy the same space at the same time. By segregating males, she creates the potential for dual marking systems to operate in different ways at different times. Understanding this is important as it suggests the potential for women to de-construct and re-construct space fluidly, in and through interaction, by creating the terms of reference for those interactions. I suggest male presence initiates a need for border maintenance and shifts in borderlines where it creates border instability.

In the following extract, Carol also indicates a spectrum of identities articulated through a single site. Culturally determined gender relations construct the foundations from which males claim belongings, arguably within segregated zones.

'I think my parents particularly felt a sense of relief because she's very fair skinned, that almost made them feel better, and yet I remember when Tilly family first came round when Tilly was born, I remember them looking at her fingernails and they kind of said in a satisfied way oh she will have colour' (Carol 40's)

For Carol's parents there was a moment of undecideability and 'sense of relief'. Carol intimates the impact of skin tone did not present such a barrier to belonging as anticipated. Fair skinned children are assumed to be more easily absorbed within the collective and Carol's parents respond to that opportunity. They detect a potential for whiteness to make family connections explicit, whereas the black extended family make their own claim against the child. Black family members endorse belongings to a black collective, *'in a satisfied way'*, drawing on a well-versed discourse of biological and racial difference. Connotations of passing are evident where the 'real' blood origins of the baby will become increasingly visible as she grows. It might be possible to interpret, that in the absence of any relationship with the mother, the black family make a public demonstration and statement of connectedness. Nonetheless, if belonging is contested along racial or ethnic lines both sets of parents undermine the notion of nationality as birth right.

I move onto consider women's relocation a strategic tool to shift social contexts. Physically moving was a strategy to renegotiate a relationship between race and place. This offers a further example of gendered constructions of place by considering which symbols were reinscribed on place as significant. It was clear that both urban and rural environments represented different landscapes of opportunity and challenge. Sonia had talked about her planned relocation to London where she appreciated the value of city living and multicultural spaces.

'In London you see so many people around, you in mixed friendship groups, mixed working situations, and people just having an awareness of different food different music and culture and you just don't get that in somewhere like Ireland, that's not to say there are not very white pockets and very black pockets in London as well and people who don't mix much outside their own ethnic group and of course I realise that goes on but if you want to have a multicultural dynamic and cosmopolitan life, you can have that and we have it and I cant imagine having that in any other society actually, I do love living in London mainly for that reason..... I mean Preston its not like that all there are two sides one Asian and one white and never the twain shall meet' (Sonia 40's)

In the negotiation of place the linkages between space, nation and whiteness appear to be multiple and shifting and the boundaries between private and public spaces are often blurred (Knowles 2005). Gender is a central and constitutive element of those constructions. A number of women left to find safety in the suburbs or more rural locations where they felt anonymous or less visible.

Laura talks about this in relation to her daughter and the differential impact of movement on family members

' I would rather there was more black people living here than there are as it is a very dominant white place and it has been that way, families move out [of London] just purely for the fact that I like living in a multi racial place and I feel happier surrounded by different cultures I think it is more interesting I'd love to be in London but the reason we moved out was because of the gangs and the guns and knife crime it wasn't that we lived in a predominantly black area sort of thing and when we first moved here [my daughter] was thinking where are all the black people and was shocked and couldn't believe it you know just driving through it you know everything so it has been an issue for her she has missed people' (Laura 30s)

We could interpret this form of movement as a physical act of separation to stop her daughter from being labelled in a particular way. Where Laura reluctantly identifies vacated space as a racialised zone of blackness, I argue this is the case. In moving Laura believes she has minimised the risk of crime impacting on her family, but also of her daughter being racialised. The space she moves into, considered by Laura middle class, is a model of Englishness that Laura feels afford protection and security. I argue that class, whiteness and place meld in the re-imaginings and re-memberings of home. Laura yearns for a homecoming and wants to reconstruct that zone but equally identifies security as a mundane and stultifying experience. In this moment, the interrelations of class, whiteness and Englishness come to the fore. This might suggest that Laura identifies a hierarchical structure, where to be middle class infers a privilege that she believes will mediate against the impact of visible difference.

Laura recalls that her daughter experiences a degree of isolation where there are few non-white residents. I believe in acknowledging that place will convey different meanings for wider family members, Laura recognises how visible difference and ethnic diversity challenge middle class status. However, we cannot assume the outcome will be negative. It depends on the effectiveness of Laura to deploy her middle class status to mediate the impact of visible

difference. Class privilege appeared significant in determining the degree by which parents, aunts and siblings provided support. Earlier, I commented on the high number of women educated to degree level or with access to occupational networks. I now suggest relocation to middle class environments is a further indication that middle class identity is a more robust and resilient belonging, with more complex levels of connectedness that are difficult to challenge. The aspirations of middle class mothers overrode ethnic and visible difference as determinants of outcomes for children.

Class is seen to interact with ethnicity in different ways. I argue it impacts on mobility. Sofia, for example has the financial ability to secure wide ranging resources and activities to support a multicultural view, but operates within a relatively insular space of whiteness. Exclusive networks, activities, and private schools offer an insular view of society but afford a high degree of mobility. Where middle class women had experienced racism, they tended to associate that as an attack on class privilege. By contrast, working class white mothers may experience constrained mobility, where they lacked the range of opportunities available to middle class women. I would suggest that working class white mothers generate a sense of security by embedding children within multicultural networks they consider will be more supportive. I could argue this fails, as a large number of working class women report high levels of racism and increased vulnerability. The findings suggest that amongst working class women there was a stronger tendency to define children as 'black', seeing this a strategy to safeguard young people in response to local social attitudes and personal circumstance. This remained the case where single parents had limited support from ex partners. I conclude that working class women were more conscious of blackness than middle class white mothers were and responded to this in different ways.

In other ways, contributors identified middle class status as a vehicle to increase access to networks and resources. Penny talks extensively about the middle class status of her black extended family claiming class privilege in both the United Kingdom and Jamaica. Balibar (2006) talks of a fence, being the means to protect interior spaces by defining and dividing spatial and social territories. I suggest that Penny produces strangeness as a discriminatory vehicle using occupation, mobility and patios to indicate class division amongst Jamaicans. From a privileged position, she indicates a broad range of similarities and values exist on class lines. Again, I position middle class status as transcending borders in a model of mobility that working class, race and ethnic interrelations block. This is highly reminiscent of research undertaken by Nancy Sharp 1933, 1937, discussed in the archival chapter where to be middle class avoided an

objective research gaze. Later,

'In keeping with the kind of background he has, ugh his family, Peter's aunts and uncles, they all hired a big villa in the blue mountains, in a gated and secure location, and have family reunions and that, but its not Kingston or whatever, ugh and like they are all professionals and stuff, Peter has been to the Island several times, the last time when he was 21 when he went for 6 months and he is not keen to take us because, ugh even he is not accepted there, when he is there the minute he sets foot in Jamaica he is seen as black British, as having money, and then he is badgered all the time and that's not what we want' (Penny 30s)

Penny stands behind class frontiers to distinguish her partner from the stereotypical version of blackness that circulates. They visit the "Island" whereas, Kingston is widely recognised as a place of lawlessness, violence and crime. Penny uses this discourse to position her family in a place of safety, a gated community and secure location amongst professionals. Penny does not challenge the racialisation of blackness per se, only those elements that would degrade her partner's identity and by definition her status. There is a tension here between symbols of belonging and the working of borders. Middle class status and the symbols it conveys constitutes 'other' in Jamaica, to the point that Peter is identified as British. I might argue the perverse nature of boundary construction is to deny the possibility of class hierarchies within black communities.

Englishness

There is a strong connection between class and Englishness. Rebecca does not talk in terms of class, but the elitism of Kenyan connections. She is treated like a guest of high social standing and provided with first class rail tickets, luxury hotel visits and fine dining whilst in Kenya. Rebecca is likened to a tourist albeit with an open passport. The multiple belongings she lays claim to, enable her to access a standard of living that elevates her status above others. Whilst she appropriates this value, she locates this in the class networks of her partner and her Englishness as opposed to cultural attributes of Kenyan nationality. When asked what Englishness means she says

'Well its I am a very open person, I get on with everyone, and it is I just thought I could join in with people easily, that I could you now get along with everyone, you know we get stuck in and make the best of everything, I think that people respect the English' (Rebecca 20s).

The facts of belonging (birth right, citizenship, passport, nationality) draw on an influential discourse of originary powers. I flip this around to demonstrate marginality is an untenable position. I demonstrate how white mothers employ 'invisible privilege and norms' accrued to whiteness (Frankenberg 1993) to demonstrate the conditions of belonging. What this means is a model of work to ensure boundaries remain intact. The collective imaginary assumes the construction and constitution of boundary architecture is to safeguard the patterns, histories and interests is assumes are shared. On one level, Englishness narrates shared attributes because of being born in England. Women's role is to simultaneously produce and sustain Englishness, by routinely performing and configuring meanings and practices that fortify interior border posts. In effect, border work produces versions of strangeness and white mothers point out antagonistic choices. Dissociative activities are stopped in their tracks where women produce and reproduce familiarity and strangeness is concealed within internal border spaces. Bamuta (1945) discussed the practice of hiding mixed children within the Black community as a mutually beneficial opportunity to suppress any knowledge of them.

Tara indicates the potential for the unknown to be ousted, exposing a contradictory and uncertain position of vulnerability. Latent racialised views emerge, often without warning and repeatedly in small ways. In the following extract an assumed relationship between Englishness and whiteness is exposed where blackness is a barrier to belonging. However, Tara also normalises difference where she identifies that in living in England interracial friendships and relationships are commonplace.

'It's the unknown factor, you try to put it out of your mind and get on with it, but sometimes, you know you put up with the looks, but you do need a badge that says do you know my partner is black, in case someone asks you to dinner, most of the time we keep ourselves to ourselves, we only have a small number of close friends and thinking about them, they are, lots of them are in mixed relationships and most of my friends are not English really (Tara 30s)

An extreme connection between Englishness and Whiteness is discussed in Rose's narrative. Here are more sinister and seismic challenges at home. Rose discovered details of her father's affiliations to the BNP, a secret that he had maintained for some considerable time that once ousted did not seem to disturb siblings. Rose talked at length in her narrative, her anger at being duped and the difficulties she considers in Toni having, or not having a relationship with his grandfather. One of the main tensions for Rose is re-remembering but now

through a racial lens. In terms of relationships, Rose has built a small social network of close friends that she feels comfortable and secure with. She has recently entered a new relationship with another West African male.

In my study, white mothers discriminate against pre-existing categories that are measurable and orderly that are mapped onto mixedness. They question the validity or integrity of those categories. The problem persists in terms of explaining ethnicity. How can this category relate to mixed race children? The majority of the contributors had never really considered what Englishness was. Under analysis, Englishness proved to be an inclusive and exclusive category. One way to consider this is a return to Balibar (2006:96), he writes that strangers are produced by nations, but need to be produced in a way that appears natural to support this. The question this raises is what capacity English has. Anthias (2006:70) suggests the theoretical premise for ethnicity is strongly linked to culture, symbol, and I would argue that white women giving birth to black children makes this an impossible task. Nation must rethink its terms of reference. A position that many felt was detrimental. To some degree attachment came as something of a surprise across contributors. Englishness weaved a place into the narratives as mothers discussed culture, tradition and heritage. Englishness was also admired as standards, fairness and liberal attitudes and experienced as the security afforded by anonymity and invisibility. I sense in these situations white mothers experienced a strange relationship between Englishness, national identity and diversity that initially felt impossible.

Certainly white mothers were seen to use boundary zones to inhabit, vacate and construct extended positions that challenge the notion of boundary entrapment and marginalisation. The social relations women developed did not challenge their whiteness or Englishness but allowed them to be creative in how that was performed. However, the ability to white mothers to claim whiteness differed. The assumption I made was that white women would experience a significant shift in social location and reduced or diminished social networks. Kath illustrates how the nature of her social networks changed once with a Black partner.

'I suppose you might call it a bit of a lonely road, it seems the women tend to loose friendships over time, not gain them, I don't know why, or end up socialising with your partners friends, yes that's been my experience socialising with my partners friends, its not that he stopped me going out with my friends I suppose I didn't feel I ought to and the things he likes to do are not the same, he never felt comfortable with other couples unless they were his friends and then I

suppose it was really so he could be with his friends, his friends were very important to him (Kath 30s)

Kath describes how racialised and gendered relations impact on social life and her ability to form or maintain couple friendships. There are several ways of interpreting this loss. Kath claims she resists friendships with white women who happen to have Black partners. I sense she does this to contest broader sexualised representations of white mothers, and position her relationship as something special and unique. Her Gambian partner elects nationality as the basis for friendship circles, being a meta identity better able to account for heterogeneity within newly arrived males. Kath does not see Englishness as a similarly constituted group for her. Amongst fellow Gambians, Kath senses her partner behaves in ways that challenge and undermine her status. She is compared to Gambian women who are better cooks, housekeepers and more tolerant of male behaviour. I believe Kath frames this as an attack on Englishness. Where Kath claims Englishness, I believe she rejects other as valueless. Arguably gendered relations play a significant role in structuring the relationship in ways that Kath had perhaps not noticed when they socialised in differentially racialised space. Kath believes that culturally determined gender relations constrain English women's independence when they reflect Gambian culture. However, it is not clear that she considered how gendered modes of belonging are re-articulated.

'That's like that whole thing about going to the compound and being confronted by something quite different and I'm thinking that I must have felt like that on a daily basis, I find that quite difficult because, the fact that it was different and although and when I talk to my friends although they said they liked difference, they always liked tradition as well, there's obviously something in there, you know they like pomp and circumstance, the changing of the guards, the Royal family which don't kind of go together in a funny way do they? (Rebecca 20's)

tell me more about this feeling English

'I just think I couldn't do anything, over there I felt completely, you know when I go to my mums I'd do the washing up, do whatever, I guess it was my house where I grew up, but over there I didn't feel like I could offer to do the washing up or anything, there's no Hoover they sweep the floor with a brush, they cook over an open fire, I don't know they wash in the bath when we were there were two babies one 16 months, one 3 months and she strapped a baby to her back and she would be standing like this washing in the bath.....I would ask Mark if he

wanted a sandwich and he would just laugh, I couldn't eat it plus it was just running around the garden [chicken] and Mark called me "come and see this" there was all these flies, so I lived on bread and cabbage I lost a stone he gained a stone (Rebecca 20s)

Difference is real in affect and appears to range in scale and likeability. I believe for Rebecca, Englishness emerges as more sophisticated, even at the level of domestic duty. I believe she points out shared housewifery to flatten racial hierarchies but is happy to allude to cultural difference. Englishness is stifled in Kenya, thus Rebecca's ability to operate in that space is distorted by culturally gendered relations. Where she says *I find that quite difficult* she could be reflecting on those difficulties as an outsider, but I argue she refuses to inhabit that identity. She achieves this by deflecting elements of difference that have limited value and do not represent as a loss. Rebecca recalls forms of difference that she internalised as fundamental, yet her sense of Englishness is undisturbed and remains a point of orientation that gives her a strong sense of identity. Englishness enabled free movement, new possibilities and experiences. Rebecca is not willing to give this up, but does question the exclusivity of Englishness.

Kath was amongst a group of six women that considered having a Black partner a mistake and discussed this as alienating to Englishness.

'I think my experience of Gambians, though (1sp) that has really really put me off though, I'd never go out with a black guy again, its not just what I seen with D but it's the same with lots of his friends, lots of them are just not marriageable material, not for us anyway, not for English women'

what were you looking for in a relationship?

(1sp) umgh someone that's reliable, someone that's looking out for you, that's on your side, umgh someone (1sp) that wants to build a future, you know a typical traditional guy, you know what every woman wants really, someone to have fun with, someone you can turn to when your in a bit of a 2 and 8 and someone, you can have a scream at and they will still love you afterwards' (Kath 30s)

Kath speaks on behalf of the collective to cement the idea that traditional relationships operate from a shared value base. Where she uses the terms '*not for us*', and '*what every woman wants*'. Kath positions Englishwomen as having specific and unique requirements that a relationship with 'other' cannot

accommodate. Kath has withdrawn into a space she articulates as an Englishwoman and demonstrates a commitment to uphold and protect what that means. She inscribes nationality with cultural expectations and values she associates with being English. These characteristics and qualities are generalised to a wider group that she terms English, such that nationality becomes the basis for inclusion and exclusion oppositional and incompatible modes of belonging. I suggest the incompatibilities that Kath identifies are grounded in racialised constructions of maleness that lead her to assign specific traits and characteristics to 'foreign born other', leaving the way open for Englishness to be read as birthright.

The future she refers to is already transformed on account of her having a mixed race child. The tension she experiences is to re draw boundaries that will not disturb qualities of Englishness she appreciates, but a mode of Englishness that can encompass her daughter. I think this is best understood where Balibar (1991:93) questions the basis for historical communities as a process of producing a people. To me this means imagining a people exist is tantamount to imagining a nation. At face value, birthright continues to be a primary source of achieving that. Kath does not consider her daughter is being read as 'other'. Once this is acknowledged, she momentarily alludes to boundaries that may just be within her reach, but are temporarily eclipsed.

Sam describes a mixed relationship rooted in traditional and aspirational qualities that also demonstrates shared values of Englishness.

'what can I possibly have to say, I mean thinking about our relationship what its like, when I met him I was so young, I was only 16 and I suppose its just normal with him, its not what you think, its no different, I could have got pregnant and got a council house and just lived with him, and that's what people thought would happen, but we didn't do that, we saved up a deposit we got a mortgage and we bought our first house together, and I look back at that and think yes we've done really well' (Sam 30's)

Gendered relations assign women a role to play in constructing the nation. As gatekeepers, they screen social meanings and values attached to membership criteria. Sam responds as a border guard, policing the values of traditional relationships she admires, openly disapproving of those she considered might undermine the validity of her relationship. Sam continues to emphasise elements of group identity that add value minimising the affect of visible difference. Tabili (2005) has argued in electing a Black partner a 'fault line' was revealed leading

to the 'unravelling' of British womanhood. I feel Brenda's narrative intimates a transitional phase in that process of unravelling. Her narrative is densely textured with the detail of everyday experiences of 1960s London with her Black partner with whom she was married for 25 years. What Brenda suggests is a radical disjuncture in white women's behaviours presuming that interracial relationships did not occur prior to Windrush. The archival research revealed this clearly was not the case. Each successive immigration flow appears to be positioned as if it is the first.

'I was a platinum blonde then, skinny as hell and I said you're giving me a bad name' but he pestered me and pestered me, he wanted to take me to this nightclub in Paddington and I said "I can't, if my Dad found out he would kill me". I will never forget the first time we got on a bus me and him, Jesus because it was unheard of in those days of course, I was sort of a pioneer, he was so big and black, and I was this tiny little thing sitting in the seat upstairs by the window, and the bus conductor gives us dirty looks all the way to the club and we got to this club he said what you gong there for its full of black fella's with white girls in there, somebody must have seen us on the bus, cos I went home and he [father] said to me I want to talk to you", and I thought "oh no, what have I done now". now you've got to bear in mind I was about eighteen or nineteen and he still bawled us when we were late home. He said "where have you been tonight?" and I said "well funnily enough I've been to the pictures" and he said "I know you haven't he said "so and so down the road see you – you were with a black man". So I thought I can't deny it so I said "yeah id did that's right" and all hell broke loose' (Brenda 70s)

Race mixing had been risky business in the 1930s and remained so in the 1960s yet women still made active choices to be part of a mixed relationship. By the 1970s, Veronica narrates Englishness that is white and working class. However, drawing from Williams (1958) the landscapes that Veronica experienced as a child were neither exotic nor unusual, just ordinary spaces in which difference was considered an everyday occurrence and normalised. To be in a mixed relationship conforms in Veronica's mind to what happens in inner cities. For Veronica, 'outsiders' remain families who have recently arrived and do not demonstrate shared behaviours. Therefore, a decade later there is a stark contrast in Veronica's narrative of 1970s England, which positions Black men as a trophy for progressive white women.

'A black man in Basingstoke was a trophy and all the young girls there wanted a black man, every black man got off with one of the little girls that used to chase

him about and whatever...they used to go to this Youth Club and all the Black men used to play pool and used to get together because there wasn't many of them then all the little girls used to go to this youth club and like I said a black man was like a trophy to them, like "oh Black men, I fancy them" and all the girls knew that all these men were married, but they were all doing the same kind of thing you know' (Veronica 50s)

Both women claimed to be pioneers, but I would argue a transformed set of gender relations across the time period impacts on how the experience of those borders differed (Massey 1994). Equally, gender constraints mean that social role differs. Brenda makes a shaky transition from a white racialised home space with a dominant male head of household to a differently racialised space with a black male head of household. In that move, she transitions from daughter to wife. Brenda anticipates the hard work being a white working class woman living in a deprived area. However, I believe that Brenda's system of signification becomes confused not least because of a marginal status for what would be the 'breadwinner'. I sense disorientation around gender roles led to an identification of difference and created a sense of being an outsider. Veronica may also lack the necessary skills to read culturally diverse gender relations or systems of signification beyond her own but do not replicate prior roles. Veronica demonstrates a move from daughter to matriarch. The terms freedom, escape, breaking out consolidate the idea of being in control of her destiny and challenging social convention. Veronica is sensitised to an erosion of families, relationship boundaries, and mores in wider society. The difference she experiences does not arise from racial transgression, but arguably class based and culturally significant dimensions that are difficult to navigate where the foundations for gender relations are obscured.

White Family Networks

Twenty contributors had relationships or very good relationships with white family members, not necessarily parents. Ten women acknowledged a difficult or no relationship with black or white extended families. A number of women discussed a commitment to transnational networks that were hard to sustain. I argue that belonging was commonly articulated at the level of the individual family, claimed through place and family biographies that take on a global dimension. This gave white mothers a point of orientation that spanned beyond national borders. The following section proposes the significance of white familial relationships as sources of continued belongings. I begin by demonstrating how white families respond to mixedness and how white mothers re-negotiate and navigate white familial relationships in the face of mixedness.

To support that claim I suggest that at the household level there is an anomalous combination of the significance and meaninglessness of visible difference. It was clear that difference on occasion, was worked through, muted or sustained subject to shifting contexts and motivations. It was also apparent that white mothers did not consider their lifestyles or behaviours extraordinary, rather a set of routine everyday activities. Likewise, choice of partner, in this case black, did not determine their status.

Articulating a shift in relationship familial relationships on account of between mixedness was not easily understood, with such highly differentiated factors across contributors. In this section, I consider the investment white mothers were willing to make to secure social bonds and ties by closely examining the tools at their disposal [Class, Englishness, Whiteness]. Contributors often referred to white family members, grandparents, fathers, but often brothers who had a powerful influence and impact on women's ability to negotiate belongings. When Taz, Tracey and Veronica talked about these relationships, they did so with a mixture of respect, admiration and loathing of intense surveillance. Through these interactions 'nation' crystallized as interrelations of whiteness, gender, place and class, before evaporating into negotiated commitments and individual actions. It was quite common that the wider family had limited awareness of the relationship pre pregnancy or had a limited relationship if any with Black partners. There were no clear patterns in how families responded. On occasion, childbirth magnified latent racialised concerns, when borders infringed on a more permanent basis created disquiet and relationships deteriorated. For some contributors, social support networks had reduced following the announcement or birth of children. In other families, childbirth indicated a healing and coming together of white families.

Grandparents

Grandparents took an active interest in their grandchildren, often bypassing a relationship with black fathers. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests it more likely that Black partners spent time with the extended white family than white mothers would do with black relatives. It was very rare for the narratives to discuss extended family relationships, with the exception of Rebecca who gives the sole example of parents meeting. In this example, culturally determined gendered relations and differing nationalities, account for differences across the extended family.

'We went over to Kenya the year after we got married but none of them had been over here, so she [mother in law] hadn't seen either of the children. We took her

with us to stay in Dorset, because it was during the half term holidays. Mark took the week off and we all went down to my parents and it was, she's funny, because every time my dad went to pick Katie up she'd take her off him, If she cried, if my dad was playing with her and she started crying she would take her off of him, my dad just sort of accepted it, but when my brother came round he wouldn't, but my dad's brilliant with babies, he calms them down both of them, when they were tiny my Dad would take them and calm them down, he was absolutely brilliant, he loves them, he just took it that it was a cultural thing that over there women have the babies' (Rebecca 20s)

In some families' grandparents found white mother's racial transgression particularly difficult to come to terms with. Carol talks of strained relationships with her grandmother whom she had previously been very close to. In this case, meanings changed, as they passed through intergenerational filters, from grandparents, to parents, to peers, not necessarily in response to shifting settings.

'She was absolutely horrified and spoke to my parents about it thought I was utterly disgusting she made her feelings known that I had degraded the family name and it is really difficult how it changes your relationship with people isn't it you are like trying to negotiate between A being the person you love and want to be with and this person in your family that you love as well you have to fend off questions and then go away and think about it yourself and I have a lot of negative stereotypes myself because of the house I grew up in (Carol 30's).

Where mothers sustained and developed family relationships, communication difficulties could simply be a matter of intergenerational differences. Sonia positions, Ryan as a connection between distant spheres, however, she also transcends the notion of distinct spaces by acting as a conduit between different interests.

'They didn't have any kind of relationship until he was born and I think that because my father was so absolutely besotted with R and he is his only grandchild and likely to be the nay grandchild am my father idolizes him and so I think my father has just had to accept it& they didn't communicate very well and they had nothing in common until that point... and later

'They don't have much in common, they will go and play football with him in the garden, and I look out and Ill just see the three of them out there playing, and I just think oh my god, do they have anything to talk about other than Jo and football, but they would never go out the 2 of them, they would never go to the

pub for a drink the 2 of them, never, because I just don't know what they would say to each other'
(Sonia 40s)

Tracey and Natalie positioned their mother's as mediators, playing an important role in diffusing antagonistic reactions. In both of these cases, it was mothers who told fathers their daughters were pregnant. Where strained relationships persisted post childbirth, this role was particularly important. Grandmothers took up an uncomfortable position sustaining secret contact in preference to sacrificing a relationship with grandchildren and periodically looked for potential openings to restore family relationships. In many instances, normative behaviour meant grandparents played a crucial role in the transmission of culture. Memory and story telling was used to establish or uphold significant connections to ancestors, bringing to life historically significant moments such as World War 11, or sharing traditional family recipes and Christmas ritual.

Despite early tensions, Ashlie, Beth and Liz felt that grandchildren and grandparents could have meaningful relationships. It is important to point out that women worked hard to restore relationships even when their own was irreparably damaged. Beth for example used a close relationship with siblings to re-negotiate her status in the family. Sadly, relationships with her father have not improved and Beth has to be cautious about when she visits. This extended to relationships with black family members and often resulted in children visiting families with one parent at a time. This has been successful to a large degree. Cousins spend time with one another and family occasions accommodate Beth's family profile. Again, this particular line of enquiry would benefit from deeper exploration as women intrinsically sensed it was important to sustain connections wherever possible.

Fractured or Healing Relationships

For some families the birth of a mixed race child created division and a clash of values amongst wider family members. It would be important to consider what underlined family motivations to severe relationships with their daughters. Dedicated research would be an important contribution to this debate. A partner's ethnicity may in fact have less bearing on that decision than is assumed. For a small number of women Taz and Rose in particular, family networks closely resembled those spoken of in the archive. Newly formed peer networks were fragile and lacking in resource to offer the type of support new mothers may benefit from, yet both had relationships that were supportive. Rose recently graduated which also gave her a strong sense of independence.

However, a surprising number of contributors had no contact with their father during pregnancy. Ashlie demonstrates her father did not handle his daughter's transition from child to mother easily.

'Can you remember telling your dad that you were pregnant?

I don't really want to, it was awful, really he went off his head and he hit me, and he threw me out, but he did see her afterwards when she was born, it was awful, I won't forget, no, I won't forget that's what he thinks of me, my dad he was brought up in Harlesden, in North London where there are lots of black people, when I was little we were brought up not to be with them not to talk to them, yes don't talk to blacks' (Ashlie 20s)

This was still a raw event for Ashlie evidenced by the line, *"I won't forget that is what he thinks of me"*. I sense that she tries to orientate her father's ideological position in terms of his socialisation in London assuming areas with high levels of migration are also spaces for overt racialised behaviour. This is in complete contrast to an earlier narrative where Ashlie considers her family open, a quality she interpreted as indifference to race. His behaviour has made a lasting impression. Pregnancy was a flashpoint and childbirth has proved a point of reconciliation, but not forgiveness for both parties. Contact is resumed post childbirth and she creates a space for a relationship to develop between her daughter and father.

' His way of handling it now is to make jokes about things that are not funny to me really, but I know he doesn't do it to hurt me, even somebody like me I grew up in a world that was very white, I didn't meet any black people until I was 15 and although my parents said treat everyone the same, that's obviously not what they meant, really, don't treat black people badly, just don't mix with them, I still have those internalised values and somebody says something and I agree, as much as you don't want to, and when you hear other people talking you have to draw a line, you can't always battle, my dad talks about it as if it was a novelty factor you know "we had 1 black boy in school and people loved him" and I'm like how does that make me feel, but it's that generation isn't it (Ashlie 20s)

Liz also points to transitional arrangements giving way to more solid foundations, where she refuses to accept marginality.

'They were fine initially, but when they found out I was actually sleeping with one they went mad, I was only 18 you know, I don't think it was a colour thing, it was

maybe more of an age thing, I don't think it would have mattered what colour they would have been, I think it was just that they found out, I remember her [mother] saying he's very nice but please you're not going to get married to him are you, you're not going to have children, and they were obviously really concerned, I think they thought it was a fad that I would grow out of it somehow, and somehow you would end up with this nice white partner and a white baby and it would all slot into place and everything would be you know ok, but that didn't happen, its totally different now I mean I certainly can never remember my mum making racist comments or anything so I was lucky,' (Liz 30s)

I think Liz's statement confirms many of my earlier comments. A colour-blind house gives way to racialised views when women enter serious relationships with Black men. Liz tuned into family attitudes towards interracial relationships, but again remembers a household that was not overtly racist. Liz aims to overcome short term reactions of family and friends by developing connections that place her family back on an even keel. Her approach to this is to re-articulate identities through shared experiences. 'Mixedness' moves from being a significant challenge to being normalised as everyday.

'the fact that, obviously before I had her it was very difficult, but when I had her they were made up and you know lovely, you know they have never treated her any differently, I mean I don't know, she is very close to my mum and I don't know if my mum would be a of her being different, if she took her shopping, or anything, you know you just love them, when you are with someone, someone who is there all the time, you don't notice it, if someone makes a comment then you become immediately a or whatever, but you don't think of them being different (Liz 30s)

Liz points to a period of reconciliation where families came to terms with sudden change and begin to restore everyday family connections. In this case, a grandmother taking out her grand daughter shopping and enjoying her company such that the impact of visible difference is diffused. Previously, I argued that borders accommodate temporary border shifts more easily than permanent change. Fox (2003) supports my stance in that transient and temporary spaces enable a fluidity of movement that is less likely to be challenged. Certainly, this sentiment was evident in The Young Report (1945). The central message in that document was the political impact of permanent populations and 'black' settlement. This leads me to return to my central proposition, that interracial sex represents a significant battleground in terms of shaping and driving who the collective is, and can be. I stress it was not necessarily the blackness of a

partner, or mixedness of a child that was troubling, but an unacknowledged racialised identity and what happened to whiteness that lay at the root of national anxiety. The colour problem resulted from home grown English women, not transient and temporary newcomers. Marriage did not preclude a negative shift in the social relations that Kath, Tracey and Penny experienced.

In the months leading up to pregnancy Lucy had caused anxiety at home, yet, had a particularly close relationship with her mother who often supported her through difficult patches. When Lucy realised she was pregnant, it was her mother that negotiated with her father. Lucy was still pregnant when her now ex partner went to prison and met her husband. She recalls normalised behaviours when discussing interaction between her father and second partner, fused with memories of a reaction to her pregnancy. In the extract that follows her father articulates a traditional paternal discourse concerned with his daughter's safety and security so it is unclear if her father is upset with the pregnancy itself, or with having a Black partner. Lucy draws a parallel between how a white partner might have been treated.

'Yes because like I said all of their kids [mother in law] are black you know, I always expected it would come from my side of the family you know, but they will sit down with him and they talk to him, they are really nice to him, like if he was a white, we'll put it this way with my dad he didn't really know, he was not that happy about it, but then he's more interested in wanting to know typical things like is he on drugs, has he been in prison, you know that sort of thing, so really my family didn't find out about Marcus until Reece was in my womb, and then of course because he was sticking by me, and we were getting on and that, so he was accepted straight away by them, but my uncle he was really funny about it, he's a funny bloke anyway, but everyone else by then had already accepted that I was going to be with a black man' (Natalie 20's)

White mothering seemed to take racial attitudes at face value and push through. For a number of women they accepted parents would be disappointed, but did not accept this meant they had no place within the family. Contributors rejected marginality through individual acts of resistance. Heather commodified and appropriated value from 'visibly other' to improve her quality of life. At the same time she was rooted in secure family relations with her three daughters and grandchildren so wider relationships were less important. Rebecca had access to church networks that made high demands of the relationship but offered a strong source of support. As a mature student with teenage children, Erica was carving out a completely new identity and social network beyond mothering.

Healing Relationships

Childbirth was also a healing act where families who had been challenged by the relationship came together to support one another. Evidence suggests families were more able to respond positively to children, but less so to partners who were accommodated but rarely embraced. Clare discusses this:

'You try and balance the two, the partner you love and your family and hopefully it will all come back together, my dad said to me before I got married, whilst Mark was my friend they liked him, we were professional colleagues and they respected that but once I went out with him then that was different then there was lots of tension my dad said he would not want anything more to do with me if we stayed together and if we had black children, now he is the complete opposite' (Clare 30's)

Likewise, in instances where the interracial relationship had broken down, white family members often mobilised to support mothers. Jay was a single mum living on a social housing development, but owned her apartment, was a graduate with a good job and had parents who provided financial resource to relocate to a better area. Her experience of single parenting was an indulgent, intensively satisfying outcome. Although contentious, I would argue that single parenting was a source of healing family rifts.

'my mum was very negative about my relationship, because it was obvious who the father was, but I don't think that affected her feelings towards my son, at first I though she was a bit worried about it, that he was not white and that changed, after I had him she adores him and cant do enough if anyone says anything she is the first to defend him' (Natalie sub 20)

Where Natalie indicates *'she was a bit worried'*, I think she is demonstrating that blackness was almost insignificant given the range of additional complex issues that confronted this family. Illegitimacy was yet another social stigma that was being brought into play. Anxious moments centred on pressing issues such as homelessness, unemployed and being a young mum.

Kath's relationship with her father has done a complete U-turn post childbirth. Once single Kath was single her father attempts to reintegrate her within the wider family. She has provided her father with an opportunity to re-establish relations and to invest in the role of grandfather.

'Yes straight away, the first day I had her my dad came, when I started, well he was a bit more forgiving, he started to get used to it, I thought maybe it was just a shock, as I was the first one of us to get pregnant, and he had a problem with the black thing you know, but now its like he looks after her now, he is not working at the moment so he looks after her for me, it has completely changed, I know he would do anything for her I know he would' (Kath 30's)

The fact that white families responded well to childbirth was something of a surprise. Fifteen of the white mothers discussed very positive relationships with their white families who were a tremendous source of support and families remained highly committed to one another. Carys, Rose, and Natalie had tenuous and volatile relationships, which they choose to walk away from. The age of a number of other contributors meant in a number of instances family members were no longer living. I believe that whiteness and Englishness persist through culturally determined gendered relations and in the following section I consider the dominant metaphors that symbolise belonging within the context of the United Kingdom.

Insider Systems of Signification

In this section I demonstrate white mothers acting as insiders. As white women born in the United Kingdom they demonstrate continued belongings by operating as insiders undertaking essential boundary acts. By occupying the role gatekeeper they point out systems of signification the dominant group deploy to articulate the nation and authenticate group belongings. By focusing on the role of heritage, Littler (2005) maintains that boundary work is obscured from view. The result is to deliver a naturalising effect. Contradictorily, membership criteria also needs to be commonly shared and well understood to be effective in signifying status. I explore the ways in which white mothers participate in these systems and actively contest symbolic meanings to facilitate and achieve change.

Visible Borders

Visible difference was the most common mode of identifying 'other'. I did not ask contributors to physically describe their children or partners, yet they offered incredibly detailed descriptions. I understood this as a deconstruction of fixed identity to emphasise complexity and inconsistencies. Sometimes these discussions emerged in response to photographs that white mothers brought to the interview. Lynda immediately identified that I had mixed children by the references I made to her two young boys.

'You must have mixed kids as most people can't tell the difference between them, you know, that "they all look the same to me", although they [J & A] look completely different' (Lynda 40s)

Lynda challenges a model of classification based on visible difference that is often indiscernible. From an insider perspective, visible difference appears self evident, a statement of the obvious. Yet, through discussion, orientation points intricately informed by and to hierarchical social structures, swiftly weakened under pressure from a more sophisticated explanation. What visible was, prompted rich conversations across contributors. Skin tone, body shape, facial characteristics, Mongolian blue spots and hair texture all featured. Complex descriptions of skin pigmentation, sensitivity, shading and depth of colour placed this singular category of colour in a space of magnificent inconsistency. Fairness, darkness, lightness, redness, brownness, blondness and all its possibilities featured in white mothers accounts.

Tara considers how to respond to a direct question about her daughter. As an insider she is drawn to the significance of visible difference and needs of the inquisitor. She is also sensitised to the potential for hidden hostility to be exposed and pre-empts that possibility by gauging the significance blackness will have for others. Privileged insider information acts as a reality check. Where she uses the term offended she knows that emotional connections to 'other' impact on interactions. Equally, she moves to unsettle visibility as a frame of reference to stretch belongings that encompass her daughter.

'And when I describe my daughter I say oh she has lovely long dark hair, and then I think, now should I say she is black or not, do I have to say, or not, you feel as if you have to make some sort of excuse, I say oh, that she is mixed you now, and whenever I meet anyone I feel I have to say before I go, oh my partner is black in case they will be offended' (Tara 30's)

This does not suggest that women inhabit marginal identities, but promote fluid and transformative belongings from an interior space dependent on their actions. The symbols they deploy manoeuvre across different zones as necessary. I would argue whiteness is a form of anonymity that enables this to happen. The invisibility of whiteness acts as a passport. As a visible category, blackness is equally indistinct, but does not facilitate the same degree of mobility. Arguably, this is one way of understanding why white mothers may not embrace blackness as meaningful. Erica picks up on this point where she is talking about a daughter who is fair skinned and almost blond.

' I think of the future and I think of the shock on prospective boyfriend's faces when they come into the house and meet Gary and then they see Gary and they see a black man, a Rastafarian, so that's where I think it will be, further down the line, quite interesting to see, I don't know, and I will be quite worried for them, for her in particular, because again I don't know but I think people will be shocked.....she has some very close friends that she's known since nursery, that's she's come through primary school with, and as I say, one child, her parents are from Nigeria, another girl is Asian, she's British but her parents are from Asia, and another girl has a Japanese mother and a British father and then she's a couple of English friends..... so I feel she is accepted by that group of friends, but it's when she goes into other areas of life and yeah, I suppose I just think of bringing people home' (Erica 40's)

It is not completely clear whose reaction Erica is referring to when she considers shock value. In the extract presented, Erica forges a strong association between national identities and visible difference. Within a multicultural setting his national identity is questioned whilst her Englishness remains intact. National identity retains a degree of insularity and integrity amongst other nations that accounts for historic and cultural differences. Erica assumes the English identity she inhabits is also recognisable as a point of orientation. In this sense, a national identity consolidates a sense of belonging to a multicultural group that whiteness and blackness cannot manage. Britishness accounts for intergenerational change and heterogeneity within a population marked by shared colonial histories. She uses this in reference to a child born to two Asian parents.

Erica does not attempt to inscribe her partner with Britishness or Caribbeaness. I consider Erica is saying that along with blackness, these categories lack substantive meaning. Erica resists a valueless mode of classification that would subsume her family within marginality. Equally, Erica does not include Gary within the English category. This may reflect sensitivity to his preference, on account of his own mixed ethnicity. What she attempts is to search out an identity with a well-defined boundary that can assert meaningful belongings. Rastafarianism is an important part of Gary's identity and this is how Erica chooses to define his identity. Erica does not consider this is part of her cultural repertoire, neither does she want to invest in understanding it. Erica's household is a creative space of mixedness where family can lay claim to a range of differences. Bounded identities that are restrictive make no sense. Externalised differences that had little value included: tribal language, patois, body markings,

international passports, dual citizenship, traditional food and celebrations, and in some instances personal relationships with extended family members. Women actively re-negotiate the scope and scale of differences they value to take on new meanings. Visible difference was a primary mode of othering but not the sole indicator. As discussed, white mothers discredit blackness as a category if it lacks substantive meaning. I argue this does not translate into racial and cultural incompetency but is evident of a sophisticated understanding.

Cultural Difference

Cultural symbols operated as another insiders system to represent difference. Moving beyond dominant social stereotypes of black male unemployment, crime and unsafe neighbourhoods, white mothers identified cultural practices they respected and admired. The significance of kinship and place of elders, a love of music, the sharing of food, frequent opportunities for celebration and a broader definition of family, were elements that grounded black belongings in a diasporic community. However, white mothers were charged with the mis-appropriation of black cultural symbols if they used them. In this regard, having a white mother is particularly problematic. Rites of passage secure pathways into a black community, and receive endorsement as legitimate claims but not when negotiated through whiteness. Yet, when performed within a mixed household, gatekeepers try to control how cultural resource can be used. Arguably, this critique of ownership, frames heritage as precious, fragile, and in the wrong hands, endangered. Few of the white mothers contributing to this research project conceived of culture in such essential or static terms, favouring Williams (1958) theorisation of culture as a fusion of tradition and creativity.

Lucy talks about the impact of Jamaican ethnicity on family life. Earlier in her narrative, Lucy had chosen not to articulate identity based on visible difference, but does choose culture as a way of understanding difference. Adopting a cultural lens, she freely describes aspects of family life that are specifically different over her expectations from Englishness. Importantly, this indicates a shift in her thinking. Lucy has not transitioned from a position of denial, from not seeing difference to a space of realisation. I believe she maintains her position, discrediting visible difference as a mode of categorisation but recognising the significance of other modes of belonging. She willingly labels a set of behaviours Jamaican, where she sees value in cultural determinants of belonging beyond white Englishness.

'and that is something different, their attitude to family, if you go to a Jamaicans house, it doesn't matter what time of day you turn up, there is always food, like

his sisters, its just like that, and no matter how many people are there they feed everyone, but in our house they hid it until everyone like had gone home, they're not much into sharing, not in the same way' (Lucy 20's)

Lucy identifies a preference for music, [Dub over pop] and food, [chicken rice and peas more so than shepherds pie], and informal family relationships that she experienced as saying something about being Jamaican. Moving beyond simple symbols, softer differences were experienced as profound kinship networks, a sense of proudness and confidence, discipline, and working together. Lucy gained valuable assets through her attachments to a Jamaican collective, she potentially sensed were lacking in the white collective. A contradictory reading suggests that what is labelled Jamaican could equally be black British, Caribbean or imaginary. Her husband is second generation Jamaican who has never visited Jamaica. The point is that the 'truth' is less important than the positive impact it generates. Ostensibly what Lucy demonstrates is difference re-constructed and normalised through family practice. Within mixed households families play with differences that add value and discard others. White mothers advance borderlines to enable children to move across differently racialised spaces as cultural linguistics, as opposed to in and out of discrete zones.

Biological Heritage

In moving beyond cultural difference, biological and social constructions of race were identified as important elements in externalising other. It was common for white mother's to use bloodlines as a code for racial difference. This is exactly what Anne does. Earlier there was an acknowledgement that her children were not white, however she appears to contradict this idea where she draws out biological constructions of identity as a reference point.

Do you think of your children as black or mixed, or do you think of them as English?

I think of them as mixed

What does that mean to you?

Well, its two different peoples it's a blood group thing, that's what makes them, like my daughter she's got a pigmentation thing, can you see that, can you see all these light patches, I took her to the doctors and he's put her under an ultraviolet light and she is smothered in them and they will grow and they've already started coming out and she will be that colour (pointing) she'll be white like me 'that's my little white one when she was born I couldn't believe it she was white with this amazing ball of red hair and my other daughter, she is the black one she looks like her dad' (Anne 30's)

In common with archival research, Anne sees the basis for belonging is bloodlines and heritage. Evidence of this has created a skin condition in her daughter. To the trained eye traces of whiteness are identifiable. Historically, racial admixture would have discredited any claim to whiteness. Yet Anne turns this on its head transforming the way in which biological constructions of race are used. I interpret her as claiming what lies under the surface, biology, is significant and confounds the use of visual signifiers alone to disentangle belonging. She is strategic in her attempt to restore borderlines that favour her family, by re-instating a relationship between blood ties and belonging.

Whiteness enables her to manoeuvre to a marginal position at the periphery of blackness through choice. From this space, she articulates constructions of difference that carve out belongings for her children. Emphasising a natural aptitude for music and dance, considered innate 'black' attributes, she distinguished her daughter from white children. Anne proceeds to craft an identity in that space enabling her daughter to access resources through legitimate means. I re-interpret the narrative as a response to dominant constructions of either/or claiming they happily co-exist within a designated space of mixedness. Anne brashly takes what she needs from either collective to support her daughter.

Social Constructions of Race

Social constructions of race were another system of signification, which featured regularly in the women's narratives. Notable discussion points amongst white mothers and prompted external enquiry from the public. Hair was discussed in terms of texture, softness, straightness, blackness and curl. A number of white mothers claimed that black family members used hair care routine and ritual, for example braiding, as a measure of white mother's competencies and gauge of cultural sensitivity. Arguably, a particularly gendered dimension operates where commonly it is aunts and mother in laws who led discussions. Likewise, I sensed convergence with wider political debates where hair is considered a symbolic and subversive act of belonging or separation with huge implications for women (Thomas 2006).

'Penny has dead straight hair she hasn't got a curl in her hair at all, and that's why (1sp) I think you know, she doesn't (1sp) she could pass as being Spanish, or, you know, you wouldn't then refer to her, as being a black person would you, or a mixed person, no-one would know until they saw her dad, but even then, his family is from Mauritius and that's a bit of everything, Indian, Caribbean, all sorts,

Chinese, one of his sisters looks white and one looks Indian there Italians in the family, Cubans so there is no way we would know, whereas B, if she washes it and leaves it natural it's like a real corkscrew but it actually feels quite soft. She is what you would call your typical looking mixed race child you know (Liz, 40's)

I argue Liz strengthens an awareness that strangeness can also be that which is near. Where Liz says 'you', she talks directly to the collective mobilising support for boundary realignment. She holds to account a process of 'othering', unsettling neatly defined group membership criterion by accentuating those elements of her daughter's identity that convey familiarity. Liz wants people to understand her daughter as someone who signifies attributes the white collective shares and values. She uses that position to restore borders that demonstrate a broader ethnic membership challenging an assumed relationship between whiteness and Englishness.

I offer a possibility, that Liz is claiming a powerful position using her Englishness to reconstruct boundaries. I propose two ways through which this could happen. Firstly, white mothers neutralise distance by pulling others into the boundaries with them. The effect is a shrinking of borderlands and larger interior mass knocking at internal frontiers. Secondly, exterior borderlines are pushed back. Movement stretches boundaries outwardly to encompass other, in ways that makes the core more distant and exclusive. The presence of a biological 'black' father challenges this process of fluidity. The collective reasserts boundaries that locate her daughter in a space of blackness on the strength of the 'one drop rule'. The fact that this location may be inaccessible to her is not considered. Again, I argue that Liz contests this re-positioning by suggesting paternity is not a clear signifier of belonging. High rates of absentee fathers make this as problematical as women's infidelity. I would argue that the McNeill Survey discussed in chapter 4, emerged directly from this type of consideration and in response to high levels of illegitimacy during World War II. What differed was the capacity to subsume mixed children within the white family in quite the same way that numerous illegitimate white children were.

Ethnicity & Ethnic Categorisation

Kyriakides et al (2009:292) discuss the term 'ethnic fixity', signifiers of transhistorical bonds that preclude national membership by locating individuals 'outside/inside the nation in question'. In using these categories, women moved beyond cultural and biological constructions of race, to reflect how social, geographical, historical experiences shape identity. Littler (2005:6) synthesizes a number of theoretical approaches to constructions of Britishness that point to a

diasporic heritage beyond the physical landmass of the Island. However, ethnicity was considered too mechanistic. As a model of categorisation, ethnicity stands in as a marker of natural difference, but equally marks the complexity of historic relations leading to a Britishness inscribed with multiple dimensions. In the following section acting as insiders white mothers initially use ethnicity to infer natural difference, but then deconstruct these categories to challenge the borderlines that mark interior and exterior spaces.

Biographical Snapshot of Fathers

A total of 35 biological fathers were involved as partners of the white mothers involved in this study. Chris for example had one child with her partner from St. Kitts and a second child with her Jamaican partner. Lucy had a son with a former partner but was unsure of his ethnicity and subsequently married a Jamaican male and has two more children. Anne has two girls with a Barbadian male and two more children with a Jamaican. In Heather's case a daughter is mixed Nigerian/ English, but siblings are white English. Marie has white English children and a mixed English/Egyptian daughter. Ashlie was unsure of the ethnic status of her partner.

'African Wives'

Eleven of the fathers had African heritage: Nigerian (3), Gambian (3), Egyptian (1), South African (1), Kenyan (1), two were mixed, British born mixed Gambian/Antiguan (1), British born mixed English/Ghanaian (1). Of those not born in the United Kingdom, five had entered the country to study but this did not include any Gambian males. Six of the fathers were graduates and one young male was currently studying. Three partners had acquired permission to stay in the country through marriage. At some point in the relationship, Heather and Kath established partners had previous wives and children outside of the relationship. Jay was conscious of this arrangement when she became intimate with her partner. Single children made up four of the households and single parents made up six of these households. Within these families, partners spoke a number of languages. Extended family members were often dispersed in a number of countries giving families a strong connection with transnational identities. Six women with African partners had visited Africa and met with extended families. None of these women would choose to live in Africa but have enjoyed the benefits of meaningful connections.

Sonia indicates interplay between ethnicities and nationalities in the construction of belonging dependent on the values assigned to them. Nationality is being used to unify and consolidate numerous identities, family ties and belongings

within an overarching framework that sustains complexity and difference. The identities Sonia points to can be interpreted as discrete or elements of part of a wider landscape.

'then during the world cup he was supporting England, and of course neither Ireland or Nigeria qualified, so it was easy he didn't have divided loyalties, so he supports England and sometimes he says he is English, but he has got an Irish passport and he is an Irish citizen but then he does have the Nigerian thing he has a bit of that going on as well and now that D's brother has moved in with us he has got this Nigerian uncle who talks about that and F has been to Nigeria so he can talk about his memories of Nigeria as well but I think maybe he defines himself more in terms of nationality, Irish English Nigerian rather than in terms of identity' (Sonia 40's)

Sonia points to the legal foundations for social and cultural constructions of race. In this case a passport and Citizenship rights transcend physical territories and often convey cultural cache, alongside the potential for belongings to be re constructed elsewhere. White mothers did not see children fixed in marginal places, denoting a scale of white towards non white, but reflecting a constant capacity for movement and re-contextualisation.

White mothers considered tribal affiliations intimately connected individuals to an ethnic heritage through ancestral and oral histories and that these were hugely significant to their partner's sense of self. Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Ashanti, Mandinka, were living cultures and societies, which pre-dated and survived Colonialism and were transmitted through distinct cultural practices. In fact tribal allegiances emerged as the primary mode of identification and belonging for African males in British households. The exception to this was Bridget who initially identified her partner as African, and during the interview this was qualified as North African, later Egyptian and most commonly she referred to Arabic culture, tradition and customs. Bridget was indicating that her partner's sense of belonging was intimately connected to culture, rather than ethnicity or national identity. African males with mixed ethnicity were not discussed in this way. Melissa shared her partner's biography, which pointed to a rich tapestry of black and white cultural influences during his time in care and with foster carers. Belatedly, he has chosen to explore one particular aspect of his ethnic heritage over others.

Women with African partners tended to have less frequent or direct interaction with their mother in laws. Contact occurred by telephone or extended visits, this

could lead to high expectations and intense meetings. There were language barriers that often made communication difficult. Child rearing practices could be a flashpoint, including attitudes to breastfeeding, weaning and holding practices. In these examples, difference could be interpreted as familial, ethnic or cultural practice, or as intergenerational change. Common to those white mothers who visited Africa, there was an understanding of a broader commitment to family beyond the immediate interracial relationship.

I learned a lot about him and I think that surprised me quite a bit, I suppose in some way it brought us closer together you know that I had you know seen his not so much his world its not his world anymore and hasn't been for 20 years but it used to be and I have in some ways actually I think I got on well with his immediate family they were very welcoming and included me in everythingwhat we did at that time was we made a commitment to take Tye (Brother) home with us and that was going to be our big contribution and once they knew I was up for that I was willing to play my part (Sonia 40's)

Caribbean Wives

In terms of Caribbean Wives' just under half (14) of the biological fathers had a Jamaican or a mixed Caribbean heritage which included Jamaican. None of these men were graduates. Nine of these couples remained together. Four of these women had visited Jamaica. Six partners came from other Caribbean backgrounds, with four of these males having been born in the United Kingdom. Interestingly, Caribbean wives found it more difficult to articulate their partner's ethnicity. Tyner & Houston describe the deployment of unnatural terminology and I sensed (390) awkwardness as contributors tried to tease out differences they could label as Caribbean but lacked a sufficiently sophisticated language repertoire to make that happen. Ancestral belongings, locating family biographies within specific Caribbean Islands, historicised ethnicity creating a sense of disjuncture with what is was and how it was happening now. Individual Caribbean ethnic identities and British black identities often collapsed within a single category. It was not that the women could not identify difference rather putting difference into words appeared overly simplistic. Contributors acknowledged a black Diaspora, but felt that did not stand in for a stable identity.

'I mean he was born here, but his parents were born in Jamaica, he feels that he has got no real status in either because he is English, but he is Jamaican, in England he's Jamaican and in Jamaica he's not a local, he has links with Africa and the Caribbean, so what does he put when he is asked if he is black - he puts black other or black British - it depends who is asking and what for, when he

goes back home, he is just considered a rich tourist they can tell from his accent'
(Lynda 40's)

Lynda sees Michael's trip to Jamaica as going 'back home' despite that he was born in England. She draws out explicit links to Africa and the Caribbean to acknowledge particularity, but believes he has mixed feelings about those multiple connections. She claims contemporary belongings locating him in the United Kingdom suggesting a transformed identity. I argue this is why white mothers commonly referred to blackness as youth culture or Black British culture. When Karen tells us that Michael is Black other, or Black British, she contradicts an earlier excerpt when she claims a Jamaican identity for him. Being a first or second generation migrant may have a significant impact on this. Likewise, Karen claims Michael is identified as a tourist by Jamaicans as a way of assigning outsider status and disingenuous identity. I might interpret this as evidence that white mothers sensed what was shared was most important. However, Jamaican males were considered by their partners to be very patriotic and may not inhabit a British identity.

'He is Jamaican he's proud of it really proud of it and he will want him to be to he talks to him in like Jamaican sometimes and M just smiles and smiles at him so its like he understands and he listens to reggae music and plays it to him and he loves that it sends him to sleep so he knows and there is one reggae song I used to listen to when I was pregnant and now when he plays that he opens his eyes and lays there smiling and responds he knows ' (Natalie sub 20)

In this extract, Natalie begins by emphasising a connection between her son and partner that can be developed and fostered. Natalie is almost suggesting that ethnicity can be learnt. In saying *'he will want him to be'* she refers to a potential future that is fluid but yet unknown. She sees the baby has the potential to be more than a colour – more than black, a space of possibility to be English and Jamaican is inscribed on his body. By giving him a Jamaican first name and English second name, Natalie lays the foundations for dual identities to blossom within a single space. She twice indicates that the baby understands this dualism. Birthright conveys the notion of choice here and Natalie has identified her baby can make legitimate claims to be Jamaican and/or British. For Natalie, there are strong interrelations between gender (maleness) and blackness. What was identified and perceived as blackness may in fact be maleness.

As an academic, Beth provides theoretical justification for ethnicity, hybridity and 'other' but in practice resorts to what she saw. In doing this, Beth claims the

potential for something new to have integrity and moves beyond the impasse of theoretical limitations. She resists the notion that mixed children form part of a vacuous concept of blackness, reconstructing what is significant from ancestral legacies into the borderlands of mixedness.

‘no no, it was a decision that we made, we sat down and talked about it and it was through my studies, it wasn’t prior to my studies I think prior to my studies I would have probably have termed her black, but then actually having Emma and looking at Emma and having her own physical and her own skin tone her own hair then and I must admit it was a decision that we both made, that no she was mixed race (Beth 30’s).

In terms of the viability of a mixed household, I argue an often overlooked dimension is that each individual member conveys sets of differences, such that within homespace difference is normalised supporting fluid and transformative identities. The ability for parents to support a positive mixed identity has rarely received academic attention. I believe Beth begins on this journey, motivated by the need to reflect lived experience. She reconstructs the concept of difference as a transformative belonging in ways that academia is unable to.

‘what I tell her is that it all belongs to her (1sp) and what a privilege what a good position to be in is what I have said to her and tried to tell her about her position and how exciting it is well I always felt that as we were when I was growing up like I have something extra that they didn’t have and I did I was proud about that I felt it was something and I remember kids saying to me my background is really boring and I don’t have that secret Asian side that you have and you know it is it is something like I say I don’t want to make it out you know like I know there is this whole idea especially the American mixed race studies of being a celebratory and privileged position that transcends all of these its not but its still a good position I think it’s a good thing to be mixed’ (Beth 30’s)

Faith as a System of Signification

The importance of faith was highly differentiated across the sample. A large number of contributors made no reference to religion at all, suggesting it had little impact on shaping belonging. Other contributors talked of a developing sensitivity to religious beliefs having encountered mother in laws who were keen churchgoers. Three women talked about their faith as active churchgoers. Five women identified as being Catholic but did not necessarily attend church services beyond seasonal celebrations. A mother’s religious identity had been a resource to support children in accessing faith based schools. In urban areas this was

considered particularly important. Two women had met partners through church networks. Rachael said this both strengthened and challenged the relationship. For Gina it represented her social and occupational network. Women whose partners were identified as Catholic, did not self identify with a particular religion. To my knowledge none of the women had converted to Islam. Nigerian and Gambian men were more likely to be Muslim but this information was not routinely provided.

Sociologists suggest that religion has different ranges of power resources to a nation and may govern important social institutions such as the family. For Kath, a Muslim husband brought religious and cultural difference into the relationships. The permissions that her partner assumed as part of his faith overrode Kath's cultural position.

'He said I understand that you don't think its acceptable to have more than one wife, but it is in our culture, and we do, and so I said its my culture here, and we don't, but when your in the most love you probably don't think that will happen, I mean I made him promise that he wouldn't go off with any other women, and he said well you'd better marry me then (1sp) I loved him so much' (Kath 30's)

The main impact on lifestyle involved changes to diet, observing religious practice including prayers, fasting and celebrations. Creating a dedicated space within the home for prayer was an important marker of difference. One contributor was studying Islam to consider its place in her relationship and in symbolising commitment to her partner. When religious convention was inconsistently performed white mothers found this frustrating. Modelling this behaviour Kath elects when and how faith should factor in her life, and how her daughter can use resources 'inherited' from her father. Kath claims the nationality of her partner is the reason her daughter is excluded from a Muslim young persons group.

'I wanted her to be part of it and join in, there was a local group who met in the town and they had a young persons project and she went along a few times to see what it was about and they asked her if she ate sausages and she said yes and then the woman said she wouldn't be able to go anymore, and I went mad and I said if she wants to say she is a Muslim she can and if she wants to say she's a Christian she can do that too' (Kath 40's)

As discussed previously, performing identity can be an uncomfortable process for young mixed race individuals where they lack substantive knowledge of systems

of signification assigned to discrete groups. Kath points to 'outing' disingenuous belongings through a form of interrogation. Moreover if young mixed race people did not align with a single group they have restricted opportunities for social interaction, formal learning or developing language skills that white single mothers may find difficult to support.

Karen talks exactly about that point,

'Strangely enough, I think it will be much more difficult for her. I mean she is blond for goodness sake, she will find it much more difficult to fit in [as a black family member] and will have to prove herself whereas with the others it is obvious that they are black'. (Karen 40's)

Lynda is concerned that her 'white daughter' would find a black identity a more difficult space to negotiate. She does not feel this applies to her three other mixed race children. So why raise this? I claim that Karen constructs blackness using existing insider codes that enable her to align with her black extended family and identify her three 'mixed children' as other. Culture is performed through language use, music, food, hair care, friendship groups, and ritual. By articulating the category 'other', boundary renegotiation claims possibilities and resists limitations that a defined group might demand. She appropriates belonging using well versed social constructions of blackness as orientation points to find a space of belonging. From this space she is able to incorporate an ambiguously defined 'white daughter'.

If formal demonstrations of alliance or initiation was not witnessed it was often difficult to become embedded within black networks. Demonstration may include male circumcision, ritualistic naming ceremonies, traditional African names and observing dietary practices.

'I would have to convert to being a Muslim I don't now how else you could live together really because there is too much it is too far away it is like another planet really and sometime you listen to him and think what are you on about and all the ideas that they have are like totally different from our culture' (Bridget 40's)

Bridget was the only contributor who talked of the necessity for religious conversion to make her relationship work. In this sense she talks of a bounded identity that she as an English woman is excluded from. Equally, she indicates that being Muslim is a way of thinking, a frontier that is too distant to grasp. Linking her use of the term *distant* with *another planet*, suggests two sets of

ideas originating in different spatial zones, making co-existence somewhat difficult. What is interesting is Bridget's assumption that Englishness should or is more able to accommodate change. Western culture is positioned as progressive and flexible, qualities denied Islam. English women exercise choice, in this case to not convert. A range of borderland identities that are positively or negatively constructed can be observed or disregarded as she chooses. Ethnic identity plays a central role in her life, whereas religion is most central to her partner.

Ethnic identity strongly underpins collectivity, but is under articulated. Arguably, whiteness is imagined through an English gaze, and English constitutes a particular version of whiteness. The place of religion further complicates this visioning. The exclusion of her daughter from an Arabic language group and Mosque derives from her being African not Asian. Yet, within the borders she contests this construction arguing her daughter may choose to become embedded within Islamic culture in the future and this must be a possibility for her. So, Bridget complicates the notion of belonging, if shared religion and language are insufficient grounds to claim membership. It is not visible difference that is exclusionary but the father's nationality.

Sam talks about the developing significance of her Catholic faith as a mode of belonging. In terms of contributors own faith For Sam the church has special memories providing a sense of continuity, strong attachments to family members and a sense of belonging

'Yeah, I've got to start taking them to the Catholic church as its attached to Our Lady's School, but in a way I really want to do it, because being so close to my Nan who is Catholic, I used to go with her every Sunday and I loved it, I don't know, part of me is wanting to do that with them because of my Nan, just giving them a bit of grounding, whereas with Paul's family, I'm not criticising it because everyone has their own, I don't think they go there for the same reasons, the children, I think that it's all again a bit of a competition, which one's going to be sweet, sort of thing' (Sam 30's)

Sam seems to be suggesting the importance of past tradition and family connections as a tool to negotiate contested spaces. The church operates as a context from which to implement that. We might read that Sam has selected this as a safe but oppositional space where her partner has commitments and longstanding family connections to a local black Methodist church. Sam is authenticating her culture, values and ideals as sacred. I argue that Kelly claims

a privileged space to contest family practice, which she sees as excluding her family biography. We might read that Sam is currently in a space where a number of anxieties are surfacing and she is strategically manoeuvring a route out. Sam describes the black church as an uncomfortable environment, where fundamental values are challenged. From this boundary position emerges a new identity that is able to challenge existing relations of power (Tweels 1998:236). Sam is saying I am withdrawing from this space but my children need not. In my opinion, Sam stresses the family will need to be proactive to ensure connectedness to blackness, challenging the notion of natural and essential difference. Moreover, Sam is stating this is not her responsibility. I sense her experience of obstacles and barriers in a boundary space is now used to re-orientate belonging. I believe this marks a return journey (Gowans 2006).

Bridget also identifies potential entry and exit points but stands still, marking landscapes of opportunity including friendship networks, contact with the extended family and a language tutor as future vehicles. Bridget acknowledges there may be difficulties, but does not accept a prescriptive approach. She has pre-identified that religion, language and then family will be the most significant dimensions in securing belonging. When I asked Erica to tell me a little about her partner's relationship to Rastafarianism she responds by saying:

'that's quite a confusing issue for me really, that's something he found when he was a lot younger, so it's never really been a part of our lives. It's really interesting because although he has these really strong beliefs, I suppose, gosh yeah, see I don't know, (laughs) I've lived with a Rastafarian for fifteen sixteen years and I don't know much about Rastafarianism, I feel quite guilty saying that, I almost feel that there is something lacking in our relationship because of that and he's not been very good at sharing that (Erica 40's)

Erica reads Rastafarianism as being located outside of and distinct to the relationship, yet also acknowledges it as integral to Gary's identity. Despite that Gary has strong beliefs, Erica is not conscious of what they are or if they impact on family life. Both parties appear able to compartmentalise elements of their identity, appropriating or shielding what is fundamentally important to them. Later in the narrative, she describes a tense argument emerging after Amy discussed her father's faith in school.

'Naomi asked if she could bring some things in, and I found a few bits and a couple of hats that Dean didn't wear, and she took them in and I think she stood up and did a bit of a blurb as well, which I thought was really, really lovely, really

brave of her, because he is not very prominent in their school life really, they've got a strong relationship at home, but outside the home there is not a lot of connection with him, so we came home with the bits and we hadn't put them away and he went ballistic, he was really angry, I was quite shocked, that I'd taken these things without asking, stuff that he doesn't use, he doesn't wear the hats, and a book, actually I think the day before she had asked him for something and he just gave her the book and I thought "that's not enough really" you know, and I wanted her to be able to share this with people, it's part of her life that's really not very dominant really, I suppose I'm the dominant figure and Dean isn't really, although that is quite contradictory really because he is quite domineering (laughs Erica (40's)

The capacity to withhold in reserve elements of identity that can manifest and unsettle an intimate relationship surprises her. Whereas Erica claimed there was no impact, she is angered and shocked. I suggest both parents read each other as outsiders. Erica responds by redrawing boundaries to encompass the children within a space that she inhabits, rather than occupy a shared space with their father who is externalised on account of religious beliefs. Difference appears to co-exist within the home without being claimed and shared domains are inscribed with different meanings rather than implicit delineations.

Bordering the Limit Lines: The Sexualisation of Black men

Commonly contributors discussed shared values, politics, and the art of conversation as intrinsically attractive qualities in any relationship. A significant proportion of women found Black men good conversationalists and spent much time talking. Equally, the physicality of black males was a significant attraction for some of the women and one that marked a deviation from white cultural constructions of masculinity. Acting as insiders this notion of other played out in interesting ways. There were strong associations, linking black male bodies to a model of masculinity that women found attractive. Physical strength, high levels of confidence and self assuredness, humour and sensitivity, were attributes they saw as attractive in 'other'.

'there was something very attractive about them, I don't know if it was their whole physique, personality, I don't know, personality is not a very clear thing to say really, but something about their manner, yeah, physique especially I suppose Black men are much more touchy, feely, chatty, laughing, persistent, all these sort of things. yes, persistent is a good one, There is something quite enticing about that, something attractive, yeah, I remember going to Blues and he would

be there and he looked the serious type, you didn't want to mess with him really, he was quite serious' (Erica 40's)

Erica assumes her attraction to black males is an innate quality that drives her relationships and to some degree marks her as different from other white women. She constructs a compelling model of masculinity combining physical strength, sexual attraction and mental resilience fulfilling her needs. Yet, when discussing early sexual encounters they often appeared circumstantial. Erica's first Black partner was purely coincidental, a chance meeting through flat sharing. In her narrative 'difference' was a fresh, new and intriguing destination, a strong force in determining where she went and the identity she inhabited in those spaces. The blues parties, reggae clubs and pubs she subsequently visited supported her notion of exercising a preference. On one level she was, however, in reality very few white men, if any, would have been present. The impact of where she went (destination) and her belief in destiny converged. I would argue that Erica was read as available to a black male partner. Equally, Erica moves from a generalisation, *them* to individualism, *he*, suggesting her partner did not conform to her ideas about Black men. Despite constantly questioning 'best fit', they are still in a relationship 18 years later. Erica has returned to study as a mature student and continues to be supported by Leroy. Again, I would suggest the narratives evidence how Black partners encourage white women to progress and develop careers.

Over 50% of the women were studying or had graduated. Sam was considering entering nursing, Liz was setting up a business, and Marie was involved in creative industries. At the time of the interviews Ashlie, Taz, Natalie and Carys had limited qualifications or vocational direction but all were young mums. Kath, Veronica, and Anne were the least qualified of the women but had worked hard in various caring roles. Of the 26 older women, Anne was the sole contributor who had no work record. Anne's narrative was unusual in terms of the sample but arguably she conforms to the dominant representation of white mothers as 'lower order women'. Anne had extensive friendship networks of similar women living on a large social housing development, but limited family. Both partners were 'players' who had relationships and pregnancies with other women who also lived in close proximity. She was at the centre of a complex set of arrangements and relationships that consumed her time and attentions. Anne positions Black men as irresponsible, selfish, lazy and constantly needing adulation. Despite her claiming Black men are inadequate husbands, she is adamant that she would never go out with a white man. This would be a betrayal first and foremost of her son and her daughters who she has fervently

constructed as black. She believes her experience is one shared with many white mothers where to be with white man would be a public admission of failure. Anne feels a sense of duty to her children to uphold her allegiances with blackness.

A strong sexual attraction to Black men was identified by a number of contributors, who heightened sexualised social stereotypes to construct their narrative as exciting, adventurous and fulfilling. This group of women would claim that Black men were more sensual, responsive and sensitive, making better lovers. Beth, Heather and Liz suggested that being with a black man allowed them to be more feminine to feel like a woman. One way to interpret this might be to suggest that women were more conscious of their whiteness, which included idealised notions of white femininity. Where experience did not accord with discursive constructions of black male sexuality these failings were discarded and as Lucy demonstrates black males were identified as preferable along non sexual lines.

'I think it is different I mean I always think that well I know one black woman and she goes out with a white man and she says the things that she likes about him are that he is much more affectionate and he does the whole birthdays and cards and presents and stuff you know flowers chocolates you know the works and all that kind of stuff and that is the thing that when I think about white men I think oh god not more chocolates for gods sake and all that crap and I'm thinking the thing I probably like about Black men is this kind of I don't know quite how to say it tough, strong, masculine umg kind of sexy (laugh) ok great in bed, very attentive if you know what I mean, actually know how to be with a woman and just talk (Lucy, 30's)

Contributors who suggested intimacy with black males was a sexual preference also self identified as sexual beings claim Black men's bodies satisfy innate needs, claiming she would never be satisfied with a white partner. Yet, she offers a contradictory interpretation where she sees sexual intimacy with Black men as new, exciting and passionate, a frontier to transcend.

'Even before I spoke to him I knew, I remember saying to my friend as I was sitting at the table watching him, I'm goanna have that man's babies, I knew straight away but think at that point you probably lust rather than love, I have always been attracted to Black men maybe it was because it was different, I don't know because there was not really any black people down there, so I guess it was just something different, there was this boy in class and he was just

gorgeous, I used to watch him out of the window, I was in a class and he was doing PE and I really liked him' (Rose 30's)

In between relationships Tracey had a relationship with a white male that she was reflecting on.

'I needed different things from a relationship, Michael was a good time, it was great sex and we could have had more children which is what I always wanted I never wanted just a child, I would have liked 3 or 4 children, but I couldn't go down that road because I couldn't afford them on my own and it was exhausting so that was what I wanted from Michael, good sex, great fun, oh god when I went out, even after we'd split up we'd have fun, we'd talk all night, we'd go dancing, we'd have... you know, there was always this passion between us, there was something always banter, there was always that whatever, whatever, you'd come home, you'd have great sex, fantastic, get up the next morning, he'd be gone (laughs) There was no money and that was it for 3 or 4 days. Whereas Phillip, Phillip was nice he offered a good lifestyle we stayed in nice hotels in the Lake District and went out for dinner, this nice white middle class accountant and he'd put petrol in the car mow the lawn and change plugs and da di da di da, god I'm ashamed of myself he'd empty the bins ...you know all that typical white man stuff that... (Tracey 40's)

Tracey seems to reinforce racialised sexualised boundaries to compartmentalise what is on offer in terms of what she wanted and expected. Michael offered spontaneity, sexual satisfaction, excitement and passion, elements that she saw as lacking in her later relationship. Phillip was predictable, ordinary, and able to provide material assets and a comfortable lifestyle. Tracey could see a strength and stability in his offer, however thought of it as mundane. As Tracey's narrative develops she sketches out tensions and challenges in terms of commitment. It is interesting that Tracey yearns for commitment within her mixed relationship, but positions it as mundane within a white on white relationship. Spontaneity was considered chaotic within her mixed relationship and lacking within her white on white relationship. I suggest that where she uses the term *exhausting*, she is telling us about the boundary work she is doing to negotiate limitations she finds restrictive.

As an insider member, in an ambiguously defined space, this is a perfectly understandable proposition. Tracey describes a complex melee of cultural determinants overlain with gendered, sexualised racialised practices that she finds disorientating. The new landscape that Tracey experienced was confusing

where boundaries were constantly shifting. It was difficult to transcend, close and/or reinforce boundaries she considered advantageous, as she was unable to hold boundaries still enough to do her work. At the point at which difference was negligible, it was overstated to reveal meaning and at this point it was deconstructed to challenge meanings. Although clear where she would like boundaries to be, she was unable to control where they may land.

Beth also contests limit lines that signify where borders are.

'yes and I remember seeing his hands and I remember thinking how lovely his hands were cos he'd got really long fingers, and it was after looking at him thinking oh he's lovely that I thought, oh he's black, so, it was you know a sort of after consciousness thing, I think, and you know it was strange, and I remember when we first got together and if we had our clothes off and, I remember seeing him with his back towards me sitting up and I said oh yes (whispering voice) he's black, umgh (1sp) and I don't know why I had forgotten whether or if it was important, but I remember thinking oh yes (whispering) he's black' (Beth, 30's)

Beth resists the sexual basis to her relationship and in so doing chooses to reflect on a moment when they are undressed. I interpret this as meaning that stripped bare, behind the layers and layering of identity is a man who has black skin. Where Beth emphasises that *it was strange*, she may mean strange to objectify her partner this way. Where she states *forgotten*, she could be indicating that at some point she had considered Black men on those terms. Equally, she could be telling us that this was insignificant. Arguably, this sentiment was shared amongst contributors.

Bordering the Limit Lines – The Racialisation of Black men

Fanon theorised the seeing and marking of black male bodies as a process of objectification that reduced blackness to a metaphor and caricature. In this section, I examine the dominant gendered gaze by considering how white mothers construct black males. Clare had grown up in a very white environment not meeting her Black partner until she began work as a health professional. Clare believed that having no experience of black people, they her parents would also have no prior assumptions or negative ideas. Amanda believed that her family were immune from the dominant stereotypes that circulated which she interpreted as having a positive impact on family dynamics.

'when I told my mum that he had asked me to marry him and I was accepting umgh all she said was he will be good to you wont he so again I think you know

they had only met him and (1sp) much as (1sp) not (1sp) having a lot of black people around could be seen as a negative I think it was a positive coz they had no negative stereotypes, it was not like the only black people they knew were muggers or hooded druggies you know, they had no preconceived anti or pro ideas, so they met Michael for what he is and what he was, you know of course they saw that he was black, but they didn't associate that with you (1sp) know (2sp) being black (Clare 40's)

Clare demonstrates the social construction of blackness has limited value and deconstructs this discourse through personal experience. She provides a blank canvas on which to write identity.

Women resisted the objectification of family members as black, but used constructions of blackness to imagine maleness.

'no not his blackness I have to say I am still very much umgh (5 second pause) its stupid and a naive statement to say that I don't see colour of course I see colour (1sp) but I don't (3sp) believe for one minute that what attracted me to Mark was the fact that he was black or anything to do with that, when I saw Mark for the first time and I can remember the very first time I saw himI felt attracted to Mark as a whole person colour wasn't an issue I would never have gone out looking for a black guy (Lynda 40's)

I argue that Lynda is challenging the label of tourist, as someone out for adventure by disqualifying blackness as a factor in the relationship.

Natalie draws our focus to gendered constructions of identity and belonging where she disclosed recurring bad dreams once a she was carrying a boy.

'I used to have dreams about it, it was a boy and it was really scary, ever since I found out I was going to have a boy, I've had the same dream all the time and I wake up, but he doesn't look like that, I just thought he was going to turn out really ugly and no-one liked him and it was horrible for him I cried when he was born I had a massive smile on my face and tears coming out of my eyes' (Natalie sub 20's)

What Natalie played out in her mind were media stereotypes and highly gendered constructions of blackness, alongside street level knowledge that Black men are often treated differently. A good number of contributors spoke about sons being vulnerable to racially aggravated assaults or just generally more likely

to be identified as troublemakers. Natalie's narrative suggests despite her young age, her life experience and network of friends might have shaped this view. Many of her peers were in contact with the youth justice system. A transition into motherhood marked a permanent transition and alerted Natalie that she may need to protect her child in ways that she is unprepared for. Again for some white mothers birth was a 'light bulb moment' where the potential impact of racial difference became inextricably entwined with their own lives.

At an individual level a number of interviewees had visualized their babies inside of them as something scary and again this was expressed as a fear of blackness.

'I course I thought about it, doesn't every women think about what their baby will look like, and that was very confusing um, it was very difficult umg, I, (laughing) right I remember my mum saying to me, something like oh those triads in Africa, you are going to have a throw-back and your child's going to be really black, and me thinking, oh and being quite frightened about it for a while looking back I'm not sure if I was frightened for me, anyway when she was born she didn't look anything like that she was so cute ' (Sam, 30's)

Sam talks about the moment of crossing as being confronted by the unknown and thinking of that as a potentially threatening and destructive force. The term Triad, albeit mis-located, conveys connotations of crime and violence, which could frame birth as a disruptive force. Where Sam states, *I was frightened for me* I interpret this as meaning that she is initially fearful for her child, this may be on hearing racialised sentiment in her home or self; but then is forced to reflect and reconcile the potential impact of the unknown other.

I claim my earlier point is reinforced here where discursive constructions of 'race mixing' as unnatural acts have permeated social attitudes. Transgression [racial] presumes that border experiences will be alienating and unknown whereas motherhood is considered transformative. The mothering experience differed across contributors. Older mothers discussed a reduction in levels of racialised anxiety over time as relationships developed or mothers became more resilient and comfortable in challenging negative attention. Second time mothers with long age gaps, like Bridget felt ageism was a more significant barrier than having a mixed child. Likewise, Sam, as with other very young mothers, was just starting out on her journey. The stigma attached to being a young mum, accommodation needs and limited support, difficult family relationships and the need to secure financial resources were far more significant at that moment than having a 'black child'. As argued earlier, the particular status of single mothers

has tended to dominate research in this field (Barns 2006). Nonetheless, there are real pressures faced by this group in terms of unstable relationships with extended family members, a lack of social support and isolation (Harman 2009). Of the 30 contributors, 13 were single mothers.

Susan tries to reconcile a contradictory set of values, claiming they result from socialisation and adopts a critical framework to self analyse her discriminatory stance.

'I have had 39 years of being told that Black men are lazy, and half of me still has those thoughts, and when they emerge its like god, and it is like if I walk and there is a load of Black men on the street, it is like god, they must be selling drugs, and I think oh god you mustn't [think that] what if that is my son, but sometimes you have flashing thoughts, and you feel guilt and (1sp) it is awful I am ashamed to say it (1sp) but if I see a black man driving a really smart car it is like wow and in our life at this moment in time I work with no black doctors and L works with none. I can't think of anyone [black male] with that sort of success and that worries me' (Susan 30's)

Erica's narrative indicates that relationships with Black men were her default position. In the following extract she demonstrates this point.

'I had an encounter with a white guy when I was about 20, just before D really, he was nice, he was grown up. I was working in an office on reception and he came in to put in a telecommunications system, he asked me out and I went out a couple of times and he was really nice. I didn't understand it; I didn't know how to interact with him, or how to behave at all. We went out and went back to his flat one night and watched a video, and he was such a gentleman. I showered in the morning and went to work, he was so pleasant, he didn't touch me, or try to touch me or anything, he was really strange, we mainly went to pubs he wanted to take me to Yorkshire to meet his parents. He was really nice and I couldn't cope with it. It was really strange, but I can't find any other words but I just didn't understand how to behave in that sort of relationship. You know, he wanted to pay for all the drinks, he talked to me, but funnily enough, my sister and my cousin used to take the Micky a bit, because I had this white guy, black guys were our thing, what was I doing with this white man, for goodness sake, there was always something about white men being boring as a teenager – I don't know, but you know, these white men were just a little bit boring. That's how they came across to me anyway' (Erica 40's)

Across the narratives, women talk of a gendered division of labour that is constructed in fairly traditional (English) ways. Erica talks about excitement and edginess when compared with more measured approaches. What males do or don't do is then assigned to racialised bodies, to which males do or don't do. Consequently narratives are laden with gendered co-constructions of whiteness, blackness and ethnicity.

Rose contrasts previous experiences against her current Black partner

'I mean, you know, when I was cleaning the house on a Saturday, he'd be cleaning the windows, he'd be doing the lawn, he did all that typical DIY that Black men just don't do..' I can't stand sitting down and watching television all night I can't do it I'm no one of those people so he'll listen to talk sport on the headphones and I'll read a novel or something you know and it just doesn't bother me if we don't go out at the weekend and if we do go out at the weekend we'll either go out for a meal or we do other things its not necessarily going out clubbing until 3 in the morning' (Rose 30's)

Rose articulates and resists a number of stereotypes associated with a dominant or notional mixed community. Rose distances her Black partner and the white collective by suggesting there are culturally differentiated limit lines. In my opinion this is why she chooses to identify activities her partner pursues as those commonly associated with Black men – sport. This is not to stereotype her partner but to read him as a black man. Rose demonstrates that mixed relationships are not extraordinary but relatively ordinary experiences. What may appear different is merely complementary. Rose demonstrates white couples constructing through a division of household labour she resists as conformist and gendered. In the mixed household space is still shared but gender divisions are rearticulated in a different yet equally complementary ways. Rose positions the household as a space where both social actors find individual expression. What is not considered is the potential that Rose finds this an easier space to resist cultural constructions of gender as restrictive clauses.

Carys has been in serial black relationships since her early teens. In talking about transitioning from one relationship to another she positions Black men's thinking on white women.

'These were his actual words why do you have to go out with another black guy they are not all as nice as me, he was very nice and he was trying to warn me that not all black guys are like that most of them are after one thing but yeah I

saw that I saw the difference there I guess you cant say that for all of them but from what I saw they want to get them into bed but they wont have a proper relationship, a serious relationship and get married but lots do I guess you have an image of the man you are going to marry and he yeah tall dark and as I used to say, obviously when I was growing up I used to like Black men, so tall dark and handsome with the emphasis on the dark you look for the perfect man don't you and you fall in love with them then you think there is a gap between the two of you' Carys (20's)

In this extract Carys is talking about a past boyfriend that she was in love with but was a 'player'. So, it is interesting that she is deflecting her personal experience to other white women and talking as a respectable married woman who met her partner at church.

Border Dilemmas - Black Networks

Few women discussed close friendship networks that included black females and this was less commonplace than might be expected for women with Black partners. Beyond the immediate family, being in a mixed relationship was considered a barrier to maintaining friendships with black women. Few contributors talked about genuine friendships with sisters in law. However, twelve contributors discussed a positive relationship with black extended families. Of, that group, Anne and Erica were embedded within Caribbean networks to the exclusion of their white extended family

Melissa talks about black family members who had not grown up together but were re-establishing relationships in adult life. Of her sister in law she says

'his sister has had to defend me to her black friends, she was talking about me to one of them, and they said you've got a white sister in law and she said my sister in law is not like the average white woman that gets a black man at all, I get on well with her she doesn't wear mini-skirts and stilettos she is okay and I get on with her'
(Melissa 40's)

There was a paucity of mixed friendships particularly in younger women's narratives. The younger contributors socialised in quite small worlds, those that lived on the same street, or went to the same school. With small numbers of black families in a given area, the potential for wider membership was not always a possibility. What has not been examined is how white females develop friendships with black males to the exclusion of friendships with black females. There were numerous incidents across the narratives of friction between white

and black females. In some instances this relates to criticism over alternative child rearing practices, as I have already mentioned.

Eleven of the contributors had at some point over the life course attended university and did tend to socialise with a broader range of individuals. Brenda is describing her experience of living in Bow in the 1960s,

You'd see them signs on the pub windows you know no blacks, no Irish or Gypsies And they was allowed to get away with it, and it was only sort of over the last thirty years, weren't it that it was changed, I mean even when I got married to Harry there were still certain places we couldn't go and it...that's why...we went to black clubs, yeah, it's safer there, yeah it's safer and um, lots of black women didn't like it but they'd look after you anyway, I've made a lot of black women friends, Yeah, And other women have said they found it- I mean, I still think that white women find it difficult to be friends with black women, I'm friendlier with black people, I can right, be friendlier with black people than I can with white people (Brenda 70's)

Brenda is intimating her social network comprised a group of people who were pushed together out of necessity, not necessarily choice. Racism and prejudice saw a coalescence of different individuals cluster together for safety and support. It could be that white friends were no longer willing to maintain friendships with Brenda, or social segregation operated particularly where Brenda labels the places she visits *black clubs*. Brenda also demonstrates restricted mobility for those who have crossed a colour line and believes that transgression delineates where and how she can access housing, leisure and social support.

Beth who concludes the reason she has good relationships with black women is an appreciation of culture offers a contrasting view.

I mean I appreciate Caribbean, Trinidadian in particular, humour and I think that I have an understanding of it, of music and film and I, I feel quite privileged that I can relate to it in lots of ways, and I find that Caribbean woman that I have met even 2nd generation Caribbean woman I've met, because you have this (1sp) love and understanding of Caribbean culture, they actually, black women take to me really quite well, at work right now there is a Jamaican and Antiguan and I sort of get put into the little sort of Caribbean link, which is really nice its really good and that, when there is sort of emails going around that have anything to do with West Indian stuff then I am included in that sort of thing, which is really nice' (Beth 30's)

Beth positions her relationship as broadening opportunities. Culture is not being passed off as flawless, but is presented as conjoined, additional and renewed.

In some instances white mothers described their homes as a social hub for Black men to meet to talk, socialise, catch up on news, drink and generally chew the fat. This was reminiscent of my findings from the Fletcher and Young Report's, which framed informal gatherings as prostitution by another name. In the narratives women argued that black men demonstrated a strong allegiance and emotional commitment to black male friendship networks. For some this became problematical once it crossed over into an intrusion of what they considered intimate spaces. Gina had an unexpected guest stay for a romantic dinner for two and Rebecca's in laws accompanied her on her honeymoon. In some sense women did not seem able to manage boundaries around intimate zones although identified where they should be.

Several of the women nurtured relationships with black family members. For Lucy it was very important to gain the respect of the family who she now feels a strong part of.

'I just thought that hey didn't take me seriously and I had to earn my place, I proved myself over and over again, especially after I had Paris..... there is no way I would go and ask people for help, I thought no, I'll prove myself, she sat back and watched and she was thrilled to bits that I coped so well, my children are not street urchins they are always spotlessly clean' (Lucy 40's)

In using the term earn my place Lucy indicates that she saw family relationships were to be negotiated not a right. She had to learn new skills and adapt her lifestyle to make that happen but has a strong sense of achievement in doing so. Arguably, Lucy identifies strongly with a Jamaican identity despite being white by socialising in middle class black networks with sophisticated cultural qualities she admires. It would be true to say that within the sample Lucy is alone in identifying herself as a member of a black family.

Sam equally had very close contact with her black extended family visiting on a daily basis, which she also interpreted as a commitment. Unlike Lucy, Sam likened herself to a piece of furniture, feeling totally ignored.

'I think they just seem me as part of the furniture and they can do or say what they please I think they think we are always going to be down the road so you don't have to make an effort' (Sam 20's)

In the black household Sam feels un-noticed and taken for granted. Where she is undervalued this directly impacts on her sense of being a good mother. One way to interpret this might be to suggest that black females ignore Sam's white presence and her gender overshadowed in a space of dominant black males. Within the black household Sam is invisible, whilst her children are read as black family members, a space where she lacks authority on racial and gendered terms.

Jay also sensed whiteness made her invisible in black spaces. In the borderlands she gains access to black spaces but cannot consume or appropriate them, suggesting weak relationships have been established.

'I just think that if I was black and put in a room with everybody they would be chatting away to me, but no, nothing no-one said a word to me, and they were all sitting there talking about people I didn't know so I couldn't even join in the conversation, I felt really uncomfortable like they didn't want me there' (Jay 30's)

Equally positive relationships with a black family were established.

'I think that Sophie would fit in okay as she has a lot of cousins and again this is like when we go to family gatherings as we often do at Christmas on boxing day birthdays and stuff we are all very close all the kids I'm the only white person but you know I just don't feel any different I'm not a of being the only white person in the room whether there is twenty or thirty family members and I'm the only white person I've never noticed it (Liz 40's).

In actuality, Liz has simplified a complex web of relations. Family and connectedness is secured between a daughter from a first relationship and in laws from a second. Birthright is de-emphasised favouring emotional ties and family commitments. She achieves this by under-articulating ethnic differences such that blackness is an umbrella term, which unites family and non family members in a wider community. Liz accords an imaginary blackness with the capacity to embrace nationalities and ethnicities, blood and fictive relations, which Liz deems includes her whiteness. Her daughter is mixed English/Barbadian, she is English and her extended family is Mauritian. I also

argue Liz does not accept visible difference as the sole organizing principle, favouring class as a unifying principle that transcends other differences. It is strange therefore that whiteness takes centre stage in the account. Liz reads complexity in borderlands, but singularity in whiteness.

In talking about black networks Lucy says,

'it don't surprise me if other women have problems with that, if we go to his sisters then its alright, but you know there's constant coming and going, it's a bit manic, the televisions on, the radios on, people coming and going phones ringing, its all going on there, and I just let it all happen, but some people might be bothered by that (Lucy 30's)

Lucy is aware of difference but does not feel it is something that needs be reconciled or challenged. She accepts that she is located within a space without needing to be defined by it. Although where she generalises from her particular familial experience to black households, she conflates blackness with ethnicity contradicting her earlier position.

There is evidence from the research to suggest that for a large number of women attendances at 'black family functions' or visits tended to decrease over time. The reasons for this were many, but a significant factor appeared the way in which white mothers felt they lacked authority in those spaces.

'I think they were disappointed because they wanted him to find a black girl. We went to see them in November that was the first time and their face dropped. I constantly compare them to my own parents they did not give him much time and I thought gosh my parents would spend an awful lot of time with him and you know forget the jobs and get on the floor and play with him they never did that and I thought gosh you have never met him and we are only here for a fortnight what hurt me was that they were very much into telling me what I should do they say they are giving advice but I took it that they meant I was a hopeless mother they were a bit cutting I got constant remarks constant banter they just through I was hopeless' (Susan 30's)

Mixed race children also operated in separate spheres often visiting black family members with their father and white family members with their mother. This indicates the ability to perform a range of identities played out through social context, in ways white mothers are unable to do.

Border Dilemmas Mother in Law

I argue that when she is operating out of context, Carys locates Mark within a collective that she does not identify with. Her narrative supports the notion that this is most likely to occur where black women are present. For Carys this was experienced in the Compound or when her mother in law came to stay. Common to other mothers were negative experiences when visiting black hairdressers, grocery stores, celebratory events or visiting in laws. One way to interpret this is to consider how gender appears to play a significant role in shaping how difference is articulated beyond ethnicity. In black female spaces, white mothers may be labelled as outsiders, self identify as outsiders, or identify black identities in those spaces as 'other, depending on the belongings they claim. I draw on Lefebvre (1999:68) who argues that place is not constructed retrospectively but becomes specifically coded through its designation as meaningful. This appears to give white mothers a degree of choice about the perspective they adopt where the same space could be simultaneously coded differently.

Carys again demonstrates how Mark's mother is able to influence the construction of place. Mother in Law assumes authority over the children as a designated role and Carys's father accommodates this on gendered and cultural grounds. Her father has restricted access to his grandchildren whilst her mother in law is present. Despite the reservations that her mother in law initially had,

'I think they were disappointed because they wanted him to find a black girl, we went to see them, in November, that was the first time we had been there, and their face dropped when they saw me, I constantly compare them to my own parents, they did not give him much time and I thought gosh my parents would spend an awful lot of time with him, and you know, forget the jobs and get on the floor and play with him, they never did that, and I thought gosh, you have never met him and we are only here for a fortnight, what hurt me was that they were very much into telling me what I should do, they say they are giving advice, but I took it that they meant I was a hopeless mother, they were a bit cutting, I got constant remarks constant banter they just thought I was hopeless' (Clare 30's)

Mixed race children also operated in separate spheres often visiting black family members with their father and white family members with their mother. This indicates the ability to perform a range of identities played out through social context, in ways white mothers are unable to do.

British based black mothers-in-laws tended to be Caribbean. Emerging differences centred on approaches to health care, parenting, including attitudes

to breastfeeding and weaning were cited as recurrent difficulties. Black men did not always play a constructive role in re-negotiating relationships but navigated a pathway inbetween often leaving the women to sort it out amongst themselves. Most certainly strangeness was compounded by inter-generational change, linguistic, cultural, and religious differences that complicated understandings and communication. Taz says,

'Jason 's mum says to me how comes you don't cook in the house, why does Jason have to do that, I think that is her ethnic background, she has been brought up with the woman cooking and ting and that, and the men going out to work, its very traditional, but I look after Aysha and he cooks and that and its different' (Taz under 20)

Taz feels her value base is being challenged. Mother in law, infers a preferred model of gender relations and division of labour that frames Taz a poor housewife but Taz sees as out of step with modern relations. The assumption is that Jason has aligned with whiteness, and is read by his mother as de-masculinised, a blackness that is unfamiliar. Evidence for this is participation in what his mother considers 'women's work'. Taz resists this model of gender relations as having little value. Clearly Taz is responding to borders that are gendered and overlain with ethnicity, race and age. When Taz inhabits the identity of mother, she assumes authority within the 'homespace' and presumes this allows her to reconstruct traditional divisions of labour. I sense this where she says unapologetically and *it's different*. In homespace, housework does not constitute an identity but a shared function that is co-constructed. Age appears a strong determinant of borders. Arguably, once in mother in laws house, Jason reverts to being a son, whereas Taz remains a mother, suggesting mothering is a permanent transformation.

Ashlie is another young mum who has recently split up with her partner and finds herself in a difficult position.

'I couldn't talk to Eugene's mother, I don't think she would understand, not really, but if I needed to go and talk to her I could, we do not get on really, actually, I kind of think she would look at me as if to say, well you put yourself in this position by having a mixed relationship, so don't come crying to me about it now that you are having problems, none of her other children are in mixed relationships and I was very aware of that, when we went and told her I was pregnant, I find she is very racist towards white people, very much so, and she is a very religious woman and though she does not intentionally do it, I do think

she looks at her [child] differently than her other grandchildren, but I don't now if that is to do with me though' (Ashlie 20's)

By contrast Karen welcomed her mother in laws input.

My mother in law sat back and watched and was thrilled to bits its not actually that you need help with hair or that you need to know how to cook chicken rice and peas, but it is a means to communicate and build a relationship with your extended family. (Karen 40's)

Summary

In this chapter, I have sketched out the production and naturalisation of belonging. I looked at modes of representation and systems of signification that advocate a community exists which transcends individual and social conditions (Balibar 1996). The concept of difference supported a deeper exploration of white mothers relationship to borderlines and the ways in which they produce strangeness and/or restrict movement. Yet, I have also re-considered the role of the stranger as a way to explore white mothers role in frontline re-negotiations. Academics have theorised how borderlines dictate movement, or that different social actors find some borders more navigable. I proposed a different approach to think through border interactions focusing on gendered production and border maintenance. By unpacking that role, I consider how white mothers continue to transform and articulate boundaries including acts to constitute nation in traditional, hence restricted ways, but also disrupt categories of control where they straddle new dimensions.

I have re-used those categories, but in ways that are flipped and recast in the production of further possibilities. Difference is normalised and by emphasising layering, complexity and interlocking identities meanings are transmuted. Insiders systems and privileges sustain connectedness and cloak movements that are otherwise considered transgressive. I believe the discursive function of archival resources has been to undermine the legitimacy of white mothers to de-authorise their use of enablers. As Stoler reasons (2006:224), '*recast, these discourses may be more about the fear of empowerment not about marginality at all*'. After all, whiteness and class status are powerful dimensions of Englishness. White mothers operationalize 'invisible ties' that they consider are meaningful to emphasise unreserved belongings and resist displacement across a range of locations. As Newman (2006, has argued it is the process of bordering that defines inclusion and exclusion, rather than the border itself. Understanding the mechanics of that bordering process includes examining the

role of social actors in policing entry and exit posts but more so their role in construction.

Using narrative analysis, I indicated that white mothers did not consider their actions extraordinary, but sketched out a set of routine everyday activities. I reposition white mothers as insiders undertaking essential border restoration in conjunction with others. In tracing white mothers actions they behaved as insiders using the referent points of the dominant collective in unison with collective members, as border guards who restore as oppose to fashion boundary collapse. Certainly, the women's narratives attest to the ongoing strength of biological constructions of race. White mothering infers a point of departure and notion of loss and nostalgia. This model of organisation is neither logical nor rational but its scientific premise lends weight to a potential for racial purity, distinguishing characteristics and lines of separation appear natural. Difference may not be 'real', but the saliency of race has synergistic qualities. Racialised discourse continues to find a voice through the notion of white blood and black blood and various fractional compositions of half, quarter and eighth and through the discourse of mixedness which locates mixed families in a space of in-betweens and chaotic impossibility. I was asking white mothers to accept their location in a space where difference had to be different enough to be fleshed out.

A pessimist would perceive mixedness is a space of nothingness, emptiness, or void. Kath may fit this model, alienated, disengaged and disempowered. A woman, who made poor decisions with lifelong implications, requires far more complex discussions to be had than a decision to have sex with a black man. Undoubtedly, mothering a mixed race child adds a layer of complexity to Natalie, Sam and Rebecca's identity, but we cannot assume mixedness determines non belonging, neither can we assume it is inconsequential. Belonging is constantly reinvented and renegotiated as new identities are deployed. In my opinion, this was an identity already under pressure on account of age, gender, single parent status, and lack of education, lack of support networks and social housing options that locates young mothers in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Lucy provides a strong counter position, she found in her partner an ally and friend. Their home is a space of aspiration and joint achievement, where the children learn to navigate and claim a range of identity possibilities that they choose to perform. What she demonstrates is a sense of confidence about belonging. She does not presume this given it is worked out and achieved.

I position Veronica's belongings as Williams does, being traditional and creative. Longstanding ties to the area confer a degree of legitimacy to the belongings that Veronica passes onto her children. Through this transmission, Veronica demonstrates she understands the East End and how the community works. She variously colludes, challenges and navigates a path through as needed. In this domain, Veronica is not a marginal player, but actively organizes, supports, information shares and signposts blood and non blood relatives, ex partners, partner's partners and children through a dense web of continuities and discontinuities. Veronica is intimately involved in the co-construction of place alongside her Black partners and mixed daughters. Historically, these areas were termed black spaces, conceived of as segregated zones 'cut off' from main towns, despite the significant presence of white women. Black males are essential elements of this imagined community, but white women equally so. In this space difference is accentuated and converges.

As a result, these challenges contribute to the changing space where women negotiate their status, social positions and belonging and how they negotiate borders through daily use. Arguably, family members understand belonging as a set of financial commitments, emotional attachments and social ties that are crafted through place. Internal arrangements support belongings where systems of signification have been transformed, or, the level at which belonging makes sense has moved away from a majority minority perspective. Despite extreme upheaval and disruption this home space performs as a rock and is an important source of validation for children. Individual self affirmation draws on wide reaching attachments to varied communities and layering that allows belongings to be constantly reinvented.

Chapter 7: At the Crossroads: Whose Meaning, Whose Experience

The focus for my research was to understand white mothering as a complex set of social relations and social dimensions. In this concluding chapter, I briefly summarise my key findings and in so doing, I highlight my specific contribution to theorising this under-researched topic. Thus far, I have argued that to be a white mother of a mixed race child is unremarkable, yet the meaning of white mothering to the collective is extremely complex and inconsistently managed. In particular, my work highlights the complex interplay of: class, whiteness, boundary architecture and ethnicity in place. Drawing on both archival data and the narratives of white mothers, I also show continuities and changes over time. My findings demonstrate that white mothers' belongings were shaped within a context of complex shifting alliances and collective structures that were ambiguously defined. The outcome of border shifts was often unpredictable. In those moments positionality was not at all clear, neither was direction of travel. In movement, dominant conceptions of belonging are unsettled and border tensions emerge. To re-establish stability, I argue border management practice 'sets the scene' through which the production of 'other' and belongings rely on. This form of stagecraft positioned white mothering as incongruent with the nation project. The basis for that authority is embedded in historical and culturally determined relations of difference.

The Past in the Present

An important aim for the thesis was to question ambiguous identities, a notion that appeared synonymous with writings on mixedness (Benson 1981, Dover 1937, Wilson 1987). This idea was salient in the primary source material I examined and in the stories of my contributors. White British women, who mothered a child with a white British/Black British, African, or African Caribbean heritage between 1930 and 2010, were complicit in a process that blurred boundaries. There had been little prior work in this field and I wanted to develop an exploratory framework beyond a definition and status that hinged on white women's individual characteristics, or singular dimensions such as racialised identities. A breadth of literature (see Chapter 3) linked belongings to systems of signification and bordered collectivities. Feminist scholarship in particular, designated the status of women as marking and making the limit lines of collective boundaries (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, Ryan 2007, 2008, Stoler 2009). In line with those approaches, an important contribution this research makes is to animate white mothers' voices.

It was equally important to push beyond that. Kuhn (1995) discussed 'absent presence' as representing a form of scene setting by a third party. For me, official materials operated in that way. The 'stage management' of records affords those in control a stake in the identity possibilities and meanings ascribed to white mothering. This includes archivists who manage those materials, but equally, officials whose authorship claims require those documents to be consumed in a particular way. One consequence of that activity is as Stoler (2002:7) explains, that rhythms of rule that were at once particular to that time and place, also speak to wider contexts. Hence, the historical records I interrogated revealed overlapping discourses of difference that have endured over time and weave into the lives of the study participants. Although I was sensitive to historical specificity, I noted patterning in particular forms of gendered interracial intimacy that conjured in the imagination an insecure national identity. These recurring ideas are based on the notion of sexual contamination, physical danger and moral degradation (Stoler 2002:46).

It was important to draw out the specificity of white women in interracial relationships. To achieve this, I examined gendered articulations and imaginings of the nation and scrutinized the treatment of women who engaged in consensual sexual relations with a racialised other. The concept of interracial intimacy was not of itself new. Postcolonial studies demonstrate how intimacies shaped Colonial relations by focusing on the critical role played by sexual arrangements. But in the period I studied, a seismic shift occurred in the context for those interactions. Government officials were confronted by interracial acts that challenged collective borders both in terms of the whiteness of the women and the fact they occurred on home soil. I believe archival materials demonstrate enduring ideas about the role of ethnicity, gender and sexuality and their centrality to nation building. I used those same materials in ways that unsettled their discursive coherency. By framing white mothering as a contentious act, we can understand how citizenship is deeply entangled in issues of race, politics and governance.

Many feminist scholars demonstrate the inherent bias of gender blind research, claiming women were in fact recruits to a model of domestic arrangements that was anything but stable. More recently, feminist scholars have acknowledged limitations in our understanding and have begun examining how gender intersects with other elements of difference (Crenshaw 1989:1241). Touching on this developing field for analytical approach, I begin to illustrate the complexity of white mothering. Through careful positioning and categorisation, the official materials I selected rendered white mothers visible as 'internal others'

(Steedman 2007, Tabili 2005:53). This enabled the racialised and sexualised dimensions of white mothering to be made explicit. I was then able to document in what circumstances, and who, mobilised state processes of differentiation to 'out' white mothers.

As I have argued throughout this thesis, white mothering creates border dilemmas and the inability to account for border movements in a consistent way. In fact, I argued white mothering created a unique set of border challenges. Customary borderlines appeared to be crumbling; yet white mothers seemed able to navigate through the most observable of borders. From this perspective, neither the notion that transgression is categorical movement across boundaries, or that dislocation operates as an affective border strategy for all social actors, holds. As I have explained, the notion of dislocation represents a fairly simplistic understanding of white mothers' status and one that failed to recognize the essential boundary work white mothers performed on behalf of the collective. Likewise, to theorise transgression is to indicate movement through a marker of distinct spheres of difference. How can we be assured that white mothers have gone somewhere if we are unable to determine a location? The idea that white mothers represent part of a Black household was rejected in the findings.

Without legislation, official concern focused on frustrating the potential for newly configured interior/exterior relations to emerge through informal means. The marginalisation of white mothers and the identification of their children as Black underpin this proposition and can be considered an attempt to re-assert firm boundaries around whiteness. I used archival records to examine the effectiveness of boundary architecture to withstand change and secure borders. This did not appear wholly successful. I reason sexualized interrelations of gender and class formed the basis for numerous border dilemmas; white mothering was linked to the nation in uncomfortable ways (Steedman 2007, Stoler 2001). One of the main contributions of this thesis is to consider the potential for white mothering to reconstitute strangeness as something familiar and to point to the conjoined nature of borders. Through a critical engagement white mothers' boundary work, I suggest that deep-rooted connections and commonalities are sustainable across borders. This is a research agenda where belonging is deeply rooted in invisible ties and emotional attachments.

In this study, contributors appeared able to side step group protocols established to strengthen differentiation in the production of national belongings. Contributors demonstrate an ability to resist marginality. The narratives of white mothers expose a malleable quality to whiteness and less categorical

indeterminate meanings. In chapter 6, I demonstrated dense interlocking and layered dimensions and claimed they serve as a foundation for white mothers transformed belongings. Success hinged on complex decisions and variable access to resources. More significantly, it considered how space was used to magnify or subsume different relations of difference. The interview setting provided an opportunity to deconstruct and construct meaning, rather than reach a final conclusion. I believe white women's ability to carve out belongings through place, also accounts for the contradictory nature of their accounts of meaning. I offer a considerable challenge to extant theory and re-cast white mothering as an anchored, yet mobile status.

I return to Bauman (1996:6) who argues that secondary analysis of public discourse is an insufficient account of meaning if it suggests a homogenous account of experiences. To redress this possibility, I supplemented archival material with individual account narratives. Together they revealed the complexity of bordered belongings and focused on white mothers' opposition to border management strategies designed to dislocate. The absence of white mothers as research informants may have sustained many of these ideas as opposed to promoting borders as places of possibility. I followed up on this to demonstrate disjuncture between those that lived as white mothers and those that imagined that experience. By introducing their voices, complex gendered, class and ethnic relations pointed to new possibilities. Nation was linked to whiteness, sexual morality and cultural practices that white mothers neither wanted, nor consistently invested in.

There was no doubt that visible difference appealed as a categorical boundary, or, as discussed by Alba (2005), a bright and unambiguous boundary that in the case of mixedness appeared crossed. However, the narratives show how powerful culturally determined gender relations were. Contributors also drew on biological constructions of difference, but these were not without challenge and reflection. In fact, there was constant movement back and forth between social, biological and cultural constructions as a mechanism to claim belongings. Conversely, this did not indicate confusion or marginality but a sophisticated understanding of the fluidity of identity, and the potential for action to secure/improve status across multiple dimensions. I reason white mothering operates strategically to re-work borders in more advantageous positions, particularly for their children. Tracey's strategic approach to racialisation in the maternity ward was one such example of using a range of tools to construct identity possibilities.

In practical terms, approaches include aligning politically with a Black collective for security and safety reasons, but culturally as white and middle class where to be mixed added cultural cache. As argued elsewhere, the narratives indicate the majority of white mothers felt their children's mixed identity conveyed advantage. In the mixed household, social mobility was also a significant factor. There was a strong focus on young people's education and achievement, matched by the high proportion of contributors who were graduates or studying. Across all age groups, Black partners were identified as the greatest source of practical help in terms of cooking, childcare and transportation. This may suggest a differently negotiated division of labour and a different relationship to public/private domains. Almost without exception contributors discussed the ability of Black men as conversationalists. There were strong bonds of mutual support, affection and co-operation. Within these households difference was experienced as culturally determined gender relations. With a large proportion of contributors in long term relationships, couples appear relatively successful in structuring their lives around differently constructed social and gendered roles and activities, although this did not characterise all families.

A major contribution of this thesis is to take up what Newman (2006) calls a 'bottom up' perspective, gathering individual white mother's accounts to disturb a dominant discourse. Through a detailed examination of their stories, I revealed the extent and limitations of contributors to construct new possibilities and open up new pathways. White mothers use border spaces to affect change and I reason they strategically transverse in and out, rather than get pushed into them. I argued that multiple relations of difference combine in ways that make marginality untenable as a permanent location. In fact, white mothers' border work illustrates how difficult it was to assert boundaries beyond fixed locations. Boundary realignment allows for a reconstruction of sharp edges around whiteness, yet equally opens up the possibilities for mixedness to be reframed as a positive experience. The narratives demonstrate an unresolved status, identity possibilities contingent on a whole host of factors.

A second aim of this thesis was to contribute to a better understanding of inconsistencies in the workings of boundaries, across time and space. For a growing number of theorists, belongings reveal complex, multiple and fluid identities that are transformed through shifting contexts (Anthias 2005, Ryan 2010, Stoler 2001). By focusing on border interactions, new characteristics and architectural detail allowed greater insight into white mother's boundary making and boundary managing processes. I suggested the potential for interior and exterior borders to support different access points. I also identified what support

was necessary to enable white mothers to negotiate and redefine those spaces. Whilst, discursive constructions of white mothering propose clean breaks and sudden ruptures, the narratives undermined the theoretical basis for transgression and questioned assumptions about positionality. As analysis developed, I explored relations between different dimensions of difference.

In chapter 5, contributors provided detailed evidence of their capacity to transform borders that appeared closed. Significantly, I proposed an ability to stretch boundaries in an outward movement to encompass a broader understanding of difference, or to draw borders inwardly, but by using different terms of reference as a way of securing cohesion. White mothers appeared to reconstruct borderlines in more favourable locations. Whether, and in what way, these dimensions facilitate agency, points to the multifaceted boundary work that white mothering entails.

Continuity & Change

I refer again to Stoler's (2002:43) discussion of national drivers. Firstly, nations are seen to represent natural communities with common class interests, racial attributes and culture. Secondly, is an assumption that boundaries are self-evident and can be easily drawn. Neither position is so clear. One way to interpret this ambiguity might be to consider that nation's afford insecure destinations, but a firm point of orientation. Referring back to Simmel, a second interpretation suggests the point at which difference begins to emerge is also a measure of spatial and social distance, but fails to account for rootedness. I moved beyond an interior/exterior dynamic and returned to theoretical accounts (see chapter 3) to reflect on how boundaries manage and account for change. Strategies that include the removal of mixed children into care, the repatriation of Black partners, the placement of mixed children in a black and minority ethnic community, or the physical relocation of mixedness through housing policy, appear to operate in ways to re-establish firm borders by enhancing distance. Yet, these reactionary policies only make sense if we position white mothering as a coalescence of behaviours considered to bring about boundary collapse.

My findings refute this claim. Contributors demonstrate the possibility for continuities, reflecting an approach laid down by Williams (1958) in his positioning of culture as both traditional and creative. Continuities and discontinuities over time are theorised as birth and the passage of time, meaning borderlines are constantly moving. I use this framework to question any idea of fixed borders, or notional idea that white mothers have transgressed borders where this is metaphoric of sudden rupture. In narrative accounts white mothers

did understand and experience social distancing. They gave numerous accounts of actions undertaken by individuals in the name of the collective, which operated as a form of social segregation in action. I demonstrated the outcome was not necessarily forced movements into unmarked zones. Both terms need qualifying as in most instances movements discussed by white mothers were elective and planned. Lynda, Carol and Liz chose to move into white middle class neighbourhoods, whereas Melissa and Sonia elected multicultural urban spaces. In settings that felt exclusionary, such as Beth revisiting old haunts, families chose to withdraw into environments where mixedness could flourish.

Similarly, I suggest the notion of unmarked spaces is itself questionable. In chapter 4, I demonstrated the language and positioning of mixedness as coloured, inscribed as sexually erotic spaces or sites of immorality, as adulterated culture and chaos. Black collectives were equally keen to distance white mothers, fearful of aligning them with criminal behaviour and illicit sexual liaisons. The spaces white mothers transitioned over were not a blank canvas, but already contested zones. In identifying movement we also highlight a boundary's porous character. As a theoretical concept, transgression cannot account for whiteness in those spaces. What Van Kirk (1980:7) warns against is the temptation to place women in the role of passive victims, thus masking disparity between perceptions and lived experience. To focus on the singularity of a racialised identity, masks the fact that it was not at all clear which boundaries in which locations, if any, had collapsed.

To explore this in greater detail, I draw on Feminsims conceptualisation of women as unsafe and unstable boundary markers (Anthias & Yuval Davis 1992, Knowles 2005, Ryan 2008, 2007). White womanhood represents a capacity to conceal difference within, and without warning, unleash frontline border disruption at the very heart of a nation. Discursive accounts position white mothers as sexually deviant, racialised acts committed by those with low levels of intelligence and limited worth to the collective. Any white woman in a relationship with a Black man was situated at the margins of society as 'a lower order and certain class of woman' (Tabili 2006). In the period I chose to study, strongly interlocking ideas of racial impurity, prostitution and moral hygiene were growing concerns (Levine 2003, Rolph 1955). I conceptualised the 'white girl problem' in similar terms to Helen of Troy. Helen is both the cause and consequence of this disruption.

Likewise, Pascale, links the production of meaning in local contexts to a broader production of cultural knowledge. *'We simply see what is there to be seen'*

'(Pascale 2008:725). Added to that, is common sense knowledge that frames visible difference as intuitively self-evident and socially meaningful. One interpretation of the workings of state apparatus is that they merely reflect that position. To argue such passivity discounts the evidence. Interracial sex has occupied centre stage in international politics for over 200 years. Legal challenges to miscegenation laws are only relatively recent developments. In 1967, Loving versus Virginia ended all race-based legal restrictions on marriage in the United States. Whereas, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in South Africa was not ratified until 1949 and only repealed in 1985. This makes Delphine's marriage to a Black South African and later trip to Robben Island seem even more fundamental.

British governments were not isolated from these wider external influences. Yet, as I have argued, in the absence of formal legislation British governments actively pursued the regulation of interracial sexual practice through border management strategies. The question asked by Stoler (2002) is why sexuality is the model through which collectives express anxiety. A major part of this thesis has been to analyse the consequences of objectification. At a practical level, the findings exposed the surveillance and policing of white women, the whispering squads and overtly racist sentiment that bubbled just under the cusp of collectivity (Bland 2005, Tabili 2006, Harman 2009). *'Metissage represented not the dangers of foreign enemies at national borders but the more pressing affront for European Nation states'* (Stoler 2001: 199). Socially, miscegenation represents a crossing of social boundaries. Politically, miscegenation represents the potential for indistinctiveness, for hazy and blurred borders to be breached. Foundations that once appeared so secure, dissipate in the flicker of intimate moments and individual acts precipitate a complete breakdown in the rigid ordering of space and social relations, where inside and outside are conjoined.

In the period covering my investigation, white mothering did not so much represent a landmark change to social and cultural relations, but marked a continuous set of practices and challenges for national belongings. I argued for a more sophisticated method of analysis, one that could capture the differential treatment of white mothers to demonstrate the ways in which different elements of identities weave in and out of prominence. Archival research documented a sustained focus on two dimensions, namely ethnicity and class. In the archival records I viewed, despite statistical relevancy there has been a disproportionate focus on interracial relationships between white British girls and Black West African or Caribbean males. I claim an interest in particular ethnic identities emerged from within a broader category of blackness. Secondly, the records I

sourced suggest interracial relationships are working class sexual arrangements. Davin (1983) reasons that class bias emerged from an Imperial guise of social welfare and philanthropic good. I argue a discourse of interracial intimacy occurs at the crossroads of race and class, but the interaction of gender, class and place privilege different modes of difference that remain an under articulated dimension of mixedness.

These are not new considerations. Long before the 'landmark' arrival of Caribbean migrants on board Windrush (1948), a visibly different homespace was already real and threatening (Bland 2005, Caradog Jones 1940, Fryer 1984, Little 1947). In the early part of the 20th Century waves of violence erupted through a series of race riots that spread across British ports (Jenkinson 1996). Voices of long standing residents with well-developed kinship networks spoke of being overlooked by the demands of policy makers to integrate newcomers. Several authors make sense of this shifting landscape as localised tensions and a period of adjustment (Glass 1967, Collin 1955). Arguably, this type of response was symptomatic of a cultural and political context that proposed the particularity of local contexts. The Young Report (Chapter 4) challenges this notion. Local residents came together to stress that interracial sex did not result from specific circumstances, demobbed soldiers from World War 11, but was an ongoing legacy. They called for state action against 'English girls' who did not belong in the area and in addition gave Black males a reason to stay. The tyranny of a localised view is to obscure a much larger and global history that is full of contradictions and inconsistencies. This is a document that points to cross class mobilisation of whiteness and Englishness. Yet, I would argue that significant fissures and border eruptions emerged when class boundaries were undermined.

At another level, the catalyst to 'turf wars' was theorised as a contraction of labour markets, housing and desperate economic conditions (Jenkinson 1996, Cohen & May 1974). Local landscapes were marked in new ways and strangeness no longer lay in the Empire and colonies abroad but resided in close proximity to British citizens in British cities (Bland 2005). Schutz's (1944) theorisation maintained that strangers were not able to permeate inner locations, yet the imminent danger interracial relations posed was that white mothers' attacked collective boundaries from the inside. Evidence provided in Chapter 4, demonstrates collective intolerance and civic duty played out through public outbursts and physical attack. As Chapter 4 highlights, in locations where white women took Indian, Arab, Chinese, West African and Caribbean males as husbands and partners, 'coloured quarters' began to develop. The role that white

mother's and whiteness played in the co-construction of British Black communities remains under-acknowledged.

The research opened up the possibility to challenge that status. The result is that pathways to block or promote multiple belongings come into view. There were strong parallels across historical and contemporary accounts. In the archival records mixedness was termed fleeting, transient and debased. In the narrative, Kath and Carys describe an experience of being isolated in social housing developments. In both, proximity to other mixed households promoted solidarity, but increased vulnerabilities and a sense of detachment. To be marginal was to be positioned beyond social norms and expectations. The evidence suggests in these spaces there was an increased likelihood of direct racism. Ashley talked about this experience as walking her daughter to nursery on the local housing estate and being ridiculed by young boys. My focus on white mothers' language provided a way to re-consider the impact of mixedness. The terminology expressed meanings that were linked, connected or conjoined. Detachment came over as temporary disorientation, such as women's accounts of the moment of childbirth. Beyond fleeting moments detachment did not make sense. I demonstrated dislocation as forceful movements to disenfranchise white mothers. This might include relationship breakdown although many women engineered new access routes into family networks.

By linking archival records with the narratives of white mothers, I demonstrate a concerted and persistent process occurs to consolidate collective articulations, classification and re-classification across time and place. In terms of white mothering, attacking parenting skills is significant here, as are representations of problematical mixed families. To make this claim is to position white mothers, or whiteness, as a damaging threat to a child's psychological well being. I reason these ideas are densely woven into official materials to such a degree, that household diversity is an accepted common sense paradigm for non-belonging and dysfunction. The assumption is that mixedness is an experience of racial, cultural and social disjuncture. What is at stake for mixed families are misunderstandings and a misplaced theory of belongings.

On-going Institutional Racism

One example of that insensitivity is revealed through accounts of white mothers as victims of racism. To date this has received limited academic attention (Ali 2003, Harman 2020, Tizzard & Phoenix 2002). In Vron Ware (1999) instances of racism are described as a multi-layered physical outbursts ranging from unprovoked direct attacks, including physical and verbal abuse, to subtle

institutional racism. The latter was often considered more difficult to accept, in the way that covert actions marginalise mixed children within social care, education and employment systems. Some of the women talked of an uncomfortable sense of collusion, where occasionally they felt they lacked the appropriate resources, most commonly language, to challenge the racism of white professionals. Engrained within professional attitudes is the belief of a white mothers' maternal incompetence and poor parenting skills and women lacked the authority to challenge professionals (Harman 2006:6, Ali 2003, Alibi Brown 2001, Twine, 2004). In response to such acknowledged levels of criticism, white mothers often rightly assumed that interactions with professionals would be patronising, judgmental and non supportive. Positioning children as black, regardless how that young person, or family chose to define their identity is one example (Harman 2009:11).

Academic and practitioner based literature infers that white mothers are ill equipped to manage racism or its effects on their children, more so, they harbour racist views on account of white privilege (Harman 2009:3). In complete contrast, the narratives indicated personal challenge and in many instances gave evidence of white mothers waging battle against the education, health and social care institutions that sought to undermine their children. Kath talked about challenging the local Islamic group from excluding her daughter. Tracey talked of challenging racism in the workplace and used her position to make equality a central concern. Anne recounted her experience with the head teacher at her daughter's school as confrontational but necessary. Marie talked about the need to contest dominant practices, but that being on the 'band wagon' meant it was difficult for white mothers to be taken seriously when they petitioned for change. Some women were more resilient and better able to manage this than others. Yes, women acknowledged racism was outside of their immediate experience, but also felt that they had the ability to identify and source appropriate support. The largest proportion of contributors were not single, but married, or in long term relationships with their Black partners. Marie and Rose had identified significant black males who could offer this type of support.

As the findings clearly demonstrate, in many circumstances white mothers functioned as gatekeepers. Equally, what went on in mixed households was just not that extraordinary. In part, this can explain the ongoing interrogation of multiple aspects of white mothering as mining for evidence of difference. Ali (2006:471) talks about mixedness troubling how race is theorised or understood. What mixedness does to the table is more important than what it brings to it. I would argue mixedness is a central site of tension for the nation precisely on

those grounds. However, it was equally important to extend the research beyond a consideration of how white mothers positioned mixedness in relation to entrenched systems of categorisation. Arguably this had been a focus for much of the earlier research (Benson 1981, Wilson 1987).

As far as my contributors were concerned, mixedness was not an identity that needed to be reconciled, or an intransigent space between two fixed destinations. Almost unanimously, white mothers positioned mixed race as an identity with integrity. As active agents in border operations, the white mothers in my study sketched out constructions sites where meaning was inscribed and re-inscribed in a purposeful way and used numerous nodes and connectors. The findings have exposed the grounds for those constructions and possibilities. White mothers supported children in a process of self-definition, whilst developing an appreciation of distinctive global and local cultures. Children were exposed to a range of resources. Shifting into ethnic identity, national identity, Blackness, or white middle class culture, was clearly advantageous in terms of securing mobility. This was not always achievable. For those outside the immediate family, a lack of clarity was likened to identity instability.

Ambiguous identities were also effective in managing obstacles and barriers, based on the power of elusive and malleable qualities. Returning to white mothers' positionality, I consider ambiguity through Schutz (1944) and his theorisation of the Stranger and Bauman's (1997) contemporary analogy of the Tourist. Both represent how movement places white mothers at risk of disorientation, or, of becoming lost in unmarked zones. Schutz (1944) positions the stranger within a space of impossibility and insurmountable difference. Tourists are open to taking ongoing trips (Bauman (1997). In both conceptualizations, individuals awkwardly manoeuvre across collective borders but never entirely belong. Movement enables experience; but meanings and outcomes are not fully understood. These concepts helped to construct a framework for movement beyond transgression particularly where a tourist is free to return home. Although this approach helped to interpret the disorientation white mothers experienced in Black households, it was unable to account for white mothers' enduring relationship to the white collective as pre-existing members. In terms of understanding how whiteness and Englishness were used interchangeably this makes absolute sense. I reinterpret blurred boundaries as increased opportunities and accessible spaces.

In Bauman's (1997) account, the tourist occupies an expansive space of opportunity with increased freedoms, but represents journeys without clear road

markings. Outward movements are understandable, but return journeys appear extremely difficult, if at all possible. The findings indicate that the largest proportion of contributors were successful in navigating homecomings or remained firmly entrenched in pre-existing networks. I might consider that the question is no longer of an actor's ability to move across interior/exterior spaces, but access to resources that reconstruct borderlines in new locations. An underdeveloped sense of culture, albeit English or otherwise, means an inability to preserve or recognise essential elements of culture that are considered valuable and important to collective sustainability. Individual women discussed difficulties in deploy pre-existing signification systems in new settings. Kath felt deskilled in a Gambian household marked by Gambian men and women, where her housewifery skills were not valued.

When likened to tourists some contributors did experience disorientation, sacrifice connections or experience home as a different space. When relationships broke down it was common to have a limited relationship with the Black extended family. Using a Schutzian framework, might account for this where it suggests being out of place or operating at a relatively superficial level. As a tourist, Heather enjoys fleeting relationships with younger men, but these often serve to remind her of cultural constraints on English females. Women's agency might appear strengthened, but left women like Kath vulnerable and in search of family approval and social acceptance. Rather than transformational opportunities, white mothers such as Heather appeared to be the architects of their own downfall. Rebecca actively discounted the label tourist where it stood in for outsider status or temporary attachments. I liken this positionality to Ricoeur's (1996) use of entanglement as a messy and interwoven relationship. There are no clear connections to make your way home or entry and exit posts have since moved.

My critique of this approach is that both models of mobility reaffirm confinement not transformation. Tourists yearn for home when away and to be elsewhere once home suggesting bridges that can be spanned. Those who negotiated the conditions of return, often 'came home' to traditional lifestyles. Ashley, as mentioned, returned to being a daughter. Peggy and Clare, re-established relationships with white partners as ways of reintegrating. Whilst contentious, I suggest that in some circumstances lone parenthood was a trigger to re-establish relations with white family members. Once identified as abandoned, vulnerable and in need, families rallied around to offer support. For Kath this was the case, but not for Carys. Being a young mother created additional complicated factors and placed additional stress on extended families support systems. Equally, this

could indicate that a mixed race child was less influential in family dynamics than having a Black partner. This might explain why white mothers chose to talk about relationships with their partner's, rather than focus on their children.

Additionally, the high numbers of degree educated white mothers undermine a broad-brush sweep of mixed race belongings. I would argue that despite the appearance of fractured identities, women demonstrate continuity. As a tourist, Rebecca achieved improved conditions in Kenya, whilst marital status facilitated a degree of legitimacy through permanent relations. Heather claimed that age was a barrier to naturally occurring relationships in England. Sexual tourism provided the opportunity to exercise choice, however tenuous that may appear. I also interpret that activity as securing legitimacy in a British mixed household where all partners are Black and all children are mixed. As discussed at length in chapter 5, marginality is assumed to result from a tightly knit discourse of gender, sex and class that remains culturally powerful. Women's sexuality was deemed out of control and undermined a nation's direction of travel (Blee 2000). This was not necessarily the case; tradition and ritual were identified as more significant than anticipated.

It is completely incongruent to infer that in mixed households, white middle class values, educational attainment and aspiration is low. Women such as Sofia and Peggy were able to re-negotiate access points and deploy middle class values and attributes through their networks. This conclusion points to complex relations between race and class that remain unexamined. The focus is redrawn to affection and social bonds, the mutual support and kinship constructed through an appeal to family. Stoler (2001) reasons that individuals pursuing self-interest expose the fragility of the nation. If we follow this argument then domestic arrangements including marriage, sexual morality, and the organisation of homespace were as significant a site for nation building as formal public arrangements. To position white mothers at the periphery, is to apply a patriarchal discourse of white femininity, sexuality, and motherhood, within a racialised discourse born of Empire (Strobel 1998). The appeal of invisible ties is to secure cultural belongings through the intimate process of re-production (Conklin 2005).

Gatekeepers play a powerful role in shielding collective interests from unravelling and in enforcement and re-negotiations are not always successful. Taz experienced this boundary work as a border dilemma. Her white status was rejected in the Black household and degraded in the white family, leading to an overwhelming experience of loneliness and objectification. Successful navigation

depended on the resources she possessed, including her negotiation skills and the emotional investment that contributors were willing to make in terms of constructing or deconstructing national boundaries. Currently, Taz has not committed to make that investment beyond the mother child dynamic. Yet, she is keen to sustain or develop extended family relationships to strengthen attachments to collectives.

In the following section, I consider some of the new developments that emerged from the narrative inquiry. I begin by asserting the decision to be in an interracial relationship is an active choice that white mothers make and not a position of last resort. In addition, whiteness and/or Englishness are no longer considered tenuous attachments, but remain influential determinants of a white mother's social mobility that convey an aura of legitimacy and authority.

Class

The most significant contribution this thesis makes is to identify the saliency of class as a factor in white mothers experiences. In her work on *Empire*, Stoler (2002:45) claims that sexual regulation was fundamental to class and racial markers. In chapter 6, I argued that white mothers used class to anchor and re-negotiate belongings and I discussed the strategies and resources they used. I re-locate *Empire* to the coloured quarters of home soil, and sexual control as the fixing of boundaries beyond gender ideologies. Interracial sexual interaction demonstrated confused symbols and degraded whiteness. My findings suggest that working class white mothers were more likely to mix in multicultural spaces and align children more closely with black networks. However, several mothers moved away from areas with high levels of migrant families to settle in suburbia. In these cases difference emerged as a non shared British value base. In working class households there also seemed to be a more acute awareness of visible difference, or racism. In her recent study, Harman (2009) alludes to contemporary white mother's experience of social disapproval, a term she used to account for negative public attitudes. But I argue that social disapproval needs a context to operate from. What is the basis for such sentiment? Anthias (2006:17, asks that we critically engage with the concept of borders and the centrality this has to people's lives, but also to focus more closely on the political agendas, the economic structures and processes of powerful interests, as opposed to particular groups.

The contribution my thesis makes is to argue the social significance of race has overshadowed other dimensions of difference that remain important determinants of mixed race belongings. For middle class women occupational networks,

aspirational parenting, and high culture remained key factors. By addressing class cleavage and the way in which access to resources shaped the conditions of exclusion, different possibilities and restrictions on white mothering come into view. Smith (1995:57) claims status has no value in itself, only in conserving and inventing a class. Alvar Saar (1998) demonstrates how women carry the burden of signifying ethnicity, in ways that men of a similar class, yet different ethnicities do not need to do. I use these to reason that class is hierarchically arranged over ethnicity, but is crossed by gender in ways that unsettles that relationship.

The findings lead me to believe that middle class white women also felt that class was more important than ethnicity. They were more likely to challenge the social significance of racial difference and gave examples of the sort of white women that would be attracted to blackness. They maintained a position of possibility by exercising a number of strategic manoeuvres in spaces where their identity was affirmed not challenged. Sofia claims state protection, Lynda moves into an area where income is more important than skin colour. Relationships with grandparents were developed, even when that was difficult, and class networks secured business contacts and resources. Being able to identify and select good schools, being assertive in terms of pupil/teacher dynamics, and mobile enough to move into middle class neighbourhoods sustained class based practices. From the evidence I gathered, middle class women did not accept that blackness was the defining characteristic of their children. Neither did they accept a mixed identity lacking in integrity. For women like Sofia, blackness was strongly associated with a working class identity and inferior destination. Equally there was recognition that children were not white, but by operating in middle class networks and value systems they claimed advantage.

The fact that this was possible echoed tensions and resentment I identified in archival research (see chapter 4). Where whiteness was deployed as a form of social value, white mothers were chastised for setting unrealistic expectations and aspirations for children. Yet, white mothers were merely acting as usual, which meant that mixed race children in middle class households were exposed to the same opportunities as their white peers. Children went to Ballet class, singing lessons, cricket clubs and Cubs. The findings document trips to multicultural events and experiences, including the celebration of global words, which Melissa identified as very important. Sonia and Rebecca discussed extended holidays and responsibility for family members abroad. Lynda discussed the 'colour of money' suggesting that resource and networks were more important in middle class neighbourhoods than ethnicity.

White mothers from middle class backgrounds also expressed minimal difficulty in adaptation post childbirth. This may reflect the views of those who returned to work and had the support of childcare providers. Women were immersed in a context with high levels of continuity and pre-existing networks. This was not always the case and Sofia was unusual in setting limitations on mixedness. However, the fact that the relationship broke down leaving Sofia a mature single mother may have been an underlying factor. However, middle class white mothers argued that ethnicity alone was less important than class alignments in shaping belonging. Although they could identify how a black ethnic identity might provide a space of personal safety for mixed young people, again this was contingent.

Interrelations of gender, ethnicity and class, created places of possibility and increased the potential for identification in a number of social locations. Enhanced mobility related to a whole range of factors including the child's experience of local schools and exposure to racism, gender, class, networks including father's networks and age of child. The belief was that high levels of resilience, economic and social privilege mediated the impact of visible difference; by occupying a broad cultural experience an identity. Included here was a deeply felt belief that a mixed ethnicity conveyed additional resources lacking in other young people, as opposed to being a deficit model. The use of white privilege and class privilege secured access to financial resources, networks and social bonds, enabling families to construct favourable arrangements or, just respond to their individual children's needs and interests. Middle class women deployed resources and opportunities to develop secure belongings including mobilising high aspirations for their children including access to good schools.

Despite class contradictions and discrepancies, class status formed an interlocking component of identity when contributors positioned their children as cultural linguists. Reay et al (2007) framed middle class whiteness as parental attitudes that valorise multiculturalism as a distasteful, appropriation and consumption of diversity for material gain. The findings point to white mothers' experience of a persistent undercurrent of challenge and charge of inauthenticity. Placing these types of restrictions on mixedness magnifies distance and betweenness. In my opinion what is at stake is a question of legitimacy – a politics of culture and heritage which decrees who can cash on what and who benefits? This suggests hard and fast rules that are not sustainable or desirable. This may explain in part why women like Sofia, still sought and demanded citizenship rights and negotiated with agencies, most commonly

schools, to foster good relations or challenge inappropriate practice. I am not suggesting that choice was the reserve of white middle class mothers, but these women identified that class privilege was a distinguishing factor in a mixed race childhood experience.

Brenda and Tracey acknowledged this in that they saw these factors as aspirational qualities they strived to achieve, despite their working class households. Both left Inner city London for the safety of the shires believing their children would have more opportunities in those spaces. In working class environments, I reported a mixed response and commitment to local networks. On social housing estates there was a greater degree of daily involvement with other mixed or minority ethnic families. Young mothers formed friendships with other women in the area who had mixed children, claiming they felt accepted and an increased sense of personal safety. Often, these girls represented a small-scale community of fairly young people who were quite heavily involved in one another's lives. These networks were considered important in promoting opportunities for children to identify with Blackness. 'Ethnic food', hair braiding, and urban music were more likely available suggesting it could simply be a matter of geography.

In areas of social housing white mothers found they were living in close proximity to other mothers with mixed children. For some this reduced a sense of isolation, whereas others resented it sensing they were targets for racist abuse by increasing visibility. Within these areas, despite limited resources children were often socialised in fairly multicultural spaces and attended schools with a greater ethnic mix of pupils. Working class women felt their children benefitted from greater exposure to multiculturalism, diverse spaces, and real life. This was considered extremely beneficial particularly beyond urban areas where mixed race children represent a small proportion of visible minorities within a class. In dual parent households' minority national and ethnic cultures had a place, particularly for Jamaicans, but on closer examination this often was intricately entwined with a Black British culture. It was unclear what home meant or whether it meant any one thing without further research.

Amongst professionals absent fathers signalled a vacuous homespace and looming identity crisis. I believe ethnicity is invoked here to smother the potential for any positive experience to see light. Interrelations of class, ethnicity and gender might help understand a tendency to see benefit in socialising boys into a black identity as a form of reality check for what lay ahead. Working class women were more conscious of stigma, but also more vocal in making their

views known. They did not believe a contradictory childhood experience was available by being middle class where racism was considered a pervasive threat to all. Neither did they accept that mixed race children in middle class households would necessarily have secure identities.

As Byrne (2006, 2006a) suggests, motherhood lies at the intersections of race, class, and gender, leading to the prescription of particular ways or sets of practices. Operating at this juncture, the mothers in her study re-inscribe place with meanings through cultural practices, values and norms enacted as everyday procedure. Culture acts as a vehicle to reaffirm children's positionality against a backdrop of raced, classed and gendered imaginings (Byrne 2006:106). There is capacity to confer tremendous power to mothers to shape interior and exterior spaces. Byrne (2006) reasons that local adaptation occurs post childbirth. Mothers adopt an increasingly local focus and make demands against local resources in different ways. I read into this a rebirth of the fictive, into a material world of ordinary activities. This type of performance goes unnoticed, is invisible and operates at the level of intuition (Nagel 2006: 52). Early Years settings, coffee shops, parks and leisure facilities are accessed at the local level, by networks of mothers who claim and shape that space, to perform parenting.

In terms of white mothering there are some identifiable tensions. Parenthood is a vehicle through which difference is negotiated in all families and in mixed families the landscape of choice may be a larger palette. A web of connections can be seen to pull identities in different directions, but also points out nodes to connect. Marriage brings to the fore gender roles, child rearing practices, ritual and family values. Why should this be considered differently for a mixed family? I believe the assumption of parenting deficit has tremendous impact. Visible difference flags up struggle, whereas same race marriages are not forced to contend with this public scrutiny to the same extent. Maternal incompetence could equally indicate that white mothers refuse to inhabit or perform marginality. What Byrne (2006) identified were important needs, in driving that new relationship to place, resonated with white mothers' views in this study. Security, emotional support, social networks and schools were of paramount importance. For all mothers, difference appeared when navigating unfamiliar spaces and was most commonly articulated as class based interactions.

Ideas that are brought into encounters both shape and reveal borderlines. Carolyn and Sonia talked about a disorienting transition from business to maternal worlds. Becoming a mother required fundamental lifestyle adjustments. For Carolyn this meant a change in social role and leaving the comfort zone of

the workplace. Carolyn struggled, with socialising in local playgroups and new mother networks, and often considered this on racial grounds. Whereas, sourcing a child minder and later identifying a good local school, enabled Sonia to return to work. Beyond the school gates interaction changed little in the local neighbourhood. White mothers did not regularly make use of local children's centres or play groups. Racial difference was identified as a factor, but class relations were also identified as uncomfortable territories. However, all white mothers did not experience this. For Sam, motherhood was an occupation that included socialising with a broad range of new mothers at local clubs, activities and coffee mornings. Sam was able to develop a range of local networks and support by modelling good parenting.

From the evidence I collected, home is not disruptive and unsettling but a calm site of renewal, representing change and transformation. I move to include the concept of settling to indicate a transformative environment. White mothers have yet to be theorised alongside 'frontiers women' or 'pioneers' who decide to move into dynamic zones to infuse the collective with life. Yet, white mothering indicates the potential for borderlands to facilitate a model of movement beyond the codifying, classifying machinery of the state. This is a highly mobile and purposive status, one that aims to facilitate permanent transformation. Settlers see border zones as a place of possibility. Liz did not see pre-marked sites of difference that she transitioned into, but was attracted to the potential for what that space could create through conciliation and consensus building. Gina did not move into blackness, but was foundational in the development of a local black community politics. Brenda used Robben Island as an opportunity to secure new beginnings through family attachments. Importantly, the foundations for these constructions did not emerge from single point of orientation, but a co-construction of gender, place and ethnicity.

Working from this context enables and stimulates new discoveries. The thesis signposts the beginning of this work and is marked by a struggle to avoid overly deterministic approaches. Transformative accounts of white mothering began by acknowledging the integrity of mixedness as a source to workup from. Again, this re-affirmed the theoretical significance of 'nation' as a source of orientation for wide ranging experiences; and whiteness provided an anchor for thirty narratives with wide ranging biographies (appendix A). Nonetheless, the relationship between whiteness and Englishness is far from clear and requires further analysis to understand more nuanced dimension

The Contradictions of Whiteness

I was interested in what happened to women's whiteness in border positions, as this seemed a source of collective anxiety. In his research, Dyer (1997:3) argues that whiteness, as a contemporary category, is understood as ordinary, neutral, normal and hegemonic. It is assumed to be the position of the powerful and a normative space against which difference is measured (Garner 2007). Yet, through analysis, I discovered that a relationship between whiteness and Englishness lacked sufficient clarity for boundaries to be so easily drawn, favouring multiple not unitary interests. Whiteness, a white identity, was in fact contingent on a number of other factors and sent out confusing messages when it was marked in inconsistent ways. Citizenship, class and gender were used to stabilise and destabilise the boundaries of whiteness that should have remained closed even under challenge. Most significantly, white mothering exposed boundaries conjoined to other in ways that were difficult to disentangle and created unstable and unsustainable, national characteristics.

Whiteness was unspoken, yet a prominent factor in all the narratives. This was a slippery concept that created unstable categories. It is unclear whether the pursuit of a racially distinct Englishness was a shared commitment or priority, particularly as gender and class were equally important social relations under threat. With the scope for what lies inside/outside so ambiguously defined, collective expectations for 'fixed' belongings and secure boundaries presents women with an impossible task. Equally, despite that a relationship between whiteness and Englishness is challenged through white mothering, those dimensions remain a legitimate source of belonging for white mothers. To assume a marginal and peripheral location for all white mothers not only distorts how we can imagine mixedness, but equally the wider collective, if whiteness and Englishness are contingent on other factors. Whiteness is a model of belonging that sets limitations on belonging, but as an ambiguous category that white mothers exposed as fragile and problematical. Power, invisibility and exclusivity are elements underpinning a social constructivist account of whiteness and these markers are made more complex when interwoven with gender and class relations of difference. So to be mixed race and middle class does not necessarily mean not to be English. White mothering highlights the need for rethinking how the relationship between Englishness and Whiteness operates.

To hear whiteness speak might be interpreted a narcissistic and self-indulgent exercise, particularly where white mothers are seen to play off the benefits of whiteness or blackness to support mixed race belongings. However, beyond Black partners or mixed race children, whiteness was an unacknowledged racial commonality that focused on white mothers' experiences. I believe this was the

most complex of discussions language. Hence, white mothers' narratives may draw on a racialised discourse where no other language opportunities seem to exist to talk about difference. Back (1996:124) framed language use as the choice to claim or distance particular identities. Distance here is a mode of challenging the dominant discourse, creating disjuncture between language as a source of signification and the feelings about what language means. Through white mothering, tensions between diverse spheres of difference began to emerge to unsettle a dominant discourse.

In pointing to complexity, ethnicity had been a factor in white mothers discussions about partners' belongings, but had not been used to claim Englishness. In the transcripts, whiteness was closely aligned with Englishness as a collective project of place, or landscape with a common history and/or destiny. This assumes the ability to maintain cohesion amidst complexity and shifting relations. Likewise, women identified solid national symbols and signifiers such as the Royal Family. Symbols that were shared said little about Englishness and some symbols were shared with other. Culture, food, music lifestyle, interests and aspirations were discussed. English as an ethnicity was less easily identified. A pure history did not stack up. In fact I believe the concept of nation avoided this dilemma in individual households. Nation enabled the complexity of belonging to breathe under the weight of being 'visibly other'. Where this included extended family members and children, identifying how individuals and groups challenge the notion of an ethnically homogeneous white nation was easily achieved.

Beyond claiming white privilege, whiteness also implies a joint responsibility and commitment to uphold collective boundaries. The basis for that authority is consistent with feminist theory, where gendered relations assign women a role in reproducing the nation (Yuval Davis & Anthias 1998). In Chapter 5 and 6, I placed women's voices at the centre of that debate to account for the systems and practices that support that status. Place of birth sustains connections that over time to enable transformed identities to emerge. I return to Anderson (1983:59) and the concept of rootedness to pursue this point. In his example, transformation enables Europeans and Creoles to appropriate and articulate different modes of belonging within a single setting. I reason that the evidence suggests white mothers harness a similarly flexible and adaptive capacity. In Erica's household simple categorisation was resisted and individual preferences flourished. Tracey described the maternity suite as offering multiple nodes of connections for a white grandfather and black father to construct a range of identity possibilities. Sofia and Lucy made demands of state institutions as active

citizens and parents to ensure the emotional well being and safeguarding of mixed race identities.

Most contributors had not considered what being white or English meant, or considered how the colonial/post colonial geographical historical, political and cultural forces shaped that concept. Balibar and Wallerstein (1991:71) claim there should be nothing more obvious than who or what a people are. Yet, the process of producing a people is an ongoing project. Arguably white mothers were not necessarily conscious of their role in this project, or the need to preserve historical legacy. Most importantly, they actively resist ethnic categories that do not accord with their experience or establish insurmountable boundaries between a mother and her child. I would argue that white mothers were far more concerned with shaping future possibilities and finding out ways for that to happen rather than completing ethnic monitoring forms. However, they used these categories to demonstrate contingencies and to discuss why past identities were not necessarily relevant in contemporary Britain. Most of the contributors used whiteness and Englishness interchangeably, whereas, whiteness and Irishness were not discussed in the same way. This suggests that forms of whiteness were dependent on location. English, as described by Bonnet (2000), is an ethnically resonant substitute for whiteness. I situate white mothering at the intersection of discursive narratives of Empire, race, gender, class, sexuality and immigration, as a contested and negotiated version Englishness.

Beyond whiteness, McClintock (1995) talks about a powerful role for cultural transmission, in a process of passing on, the 'nation', between generations to generations (quoted in Yuval Davis & Stoetzler, 2002:335). The question is who has authority to pass on what? From the narratives, whiteness was challenged when assigned to mixed race bodies. Likewise, white mothers were conscious of criticism for their inappropriate use of blackness, where it was framed as material culture and community assets. Anderson (1983:136) argues that family does not support the nation, but is the place where nation begins. This suggests that collective fate is tied to individual practices rather than determines what they are. In accounts of Colonial homes, Stoler (2001) reasons that unvetted and outside the immediate gaze of interested lookers, nation can manifest in contradictory ways. Music, dance, tradition, food and ethnicity gave mixed race children a degree of cultural cache and provided new family rituals. By focusing on mixedness, what was meaningful began to emerge.

I maintain that narrative was able to demonstrate that white mothers do not live parallel lives with families in mixed households, but are constituent of that place. There is no breakdown in central or core values, where culture is re-energised. This is a model of parenting that considers the future needs of children and lays the groundwork for culture to operate as an access strategy into wider networks. Marie identified the importance of Arabic language skills to ensure ongoing attachments were possible. This reflected the importance she attached to transnational belongings. Elsewhere, relationships with extended families were maintained, albeit via individual parents, so that children had access to a larger world of cousins and aunts, ritual and tradition. Using this evidence, mixedness was not an act of restoration or continuous battle to reform boundaries in formulaic and traditional shapes. Neither was culture used as a pick and mix approach, if this stands in for ad hoc. Where better alternatives were discovered they were utilised through a process of bringing together.

In acknowledging whiteness was socially constructed, it was also a more slippery concept. In the findings it seemed almost impossible to talk about being white without invoking a framework for that discussion. McIntosh (1988) claims whiteness is an invisible package of unearned assets: privilege, rights and anonymity, invisibility and access. White mothering shows the limitations of this thinking where the currency of whiteness cannot always be exercised. Additionally, where the contingency of whiteness is exposed, class, sexuality, gender and nation support or undermine particular versions of whiteness. What my findings indicate is that nation offers a conceptual model through which whiteness is expressed. Bonnett (1998) tracks movement towards increasingly fixed and narrow visions of boundaries and meanings that hem in the term white. A significant investment in European identities, gradually led to the exclusion of all other white identities from the category of white. The need for such attention to crafting and shaping whiteness implies contingencies and limitations beyond visible difference. Is Englishness a particular version of whiteness?

The privilege of whiteness subsided when women were marked by inter-racialness. Rose's experience of not being served in the supermarket irrespective of her whiteness and Englishness, demonstrates the instability of these categories and disenfranchisement by non-acknowledgement. Whereas, despite her mixed race daughter, Ashley's whiteness aided her reunification within a white working class family home where she reverts to being a daughter. Class status contributed to her vulnerability where she lacked adequate resources to be self-sufficient, whereas restored gender relations offer security. This might indicate that whiteness is more flexible than anticipated and that

culturally determined gender relations are less flexible borders. Tracey's homecoming from the Gambia did not affirm her whiteness as living abroad had already exposed this. It was English structure, process and gendered relations of governance that impacted when she returned as a single parent.

English was dynamic and white mothers re-introduced Colonialism, Empire, Black histories and British family lineage to demonstrate that. Englishness was constructed and deconstructed. I would argue that in terms of the narratives, Englishness was discussed as culture, class and gendered relations, representing relatively entrenched dimensions of difference. Access and rites of passage, departures and return journeys were more easily negotiated through whiteness, but were contorted by class and visible difference. As a young single mum, Carys was less able to capitalise on class privilege and had failed to rally support for her own 'call to arms', in challenging young men's behaviour. Yet, white privilege was claimed at every opportunity by completing 'white other' for her daughter on ethnic monitoring forms. Carys believed the possibility existed to pass on the assets of whiteness to her mixed daughter. Yet her motivation was to increase security and anonymity rather than claim a particular ethnicity.

Few mothers claimed whiteness for their child, or supported a child's claim to whiteness as a discrete identity. I acknowledged elsewhere that where this has happened, it might indicate acute degrees of isolation and a mother's desire to protect her child with one of the few resources she feels she has, her white racial identity. I believe this supports my earlier claim. White mothers did not sense a loss of whiteness on account of mothering a mixed child. A more accurate description might be increased sensitivity and an acute sense of whiteness as a privileged position or identity that can be deployed. This being so, it is not difficult to see why white mothers would see whiteness as advantageous. In each example class relations are a dominant factor in shaping experience. Peggy dismissed the currency of whiteness claiming class was a more important determinant of mobility and social status. Lynda refused to be identified using any model of categorisation that talks to gender, race or ethnicity. She chose to locate herself within an aspirational middle class environment away from multiculturalism, but with the legitimacy to opt into cultural activities should she choose to. Melissa anchors belonging through urban spaces, in the accessible resources and activities that enable multiculturalism to flourish.

Donovan (2005) describes the effectiveness of gatekeeping was hinged on the degree or level of innocence women could draw on to mediate the situation. I interpret this to mean the breadth of resources women could draw upon to

uphold their status would be influential in the final decision on that status. Peggy cited class mobility as important, however this was densely interwoven with ethnicity and place. For Lynda, class, race and place were equally influential. They constitute a totality that women can deploy through a differential emphasis, within different contexts and at different times. This process is continuously being re-worked, subject to what is necessary within a given context. Given this proposition it is easy to understand why white mothers might be positioned ever closer to Balibar's (2009) contemporary conceptualization of the 'stranger, as an enemy within'.

Boundary Architecture

I undertook a detailed examination of boundary architecture to determine what happened at borders and concluded that this was not at all predictable. Border interaction is considered to be a majority and minority member dynamic to overcome or protect boundaries. Nonetheless, boundary work is difficult to disentangle and reveals high levels of contingencies and inconsistencies. White mothers work, in part, is to reproduce and reinstate boundary lines, however this occurs alongside their ability to stretch and re-fashion the nation in creative ways. I explored how white women engaged collective markers and shared systems of signification to de-construct, re-construct and maintain boundaries in the collective groups' interests, where they melded with their own. To some extent this fleshes out the 'paradoxical positioning of women as both 'symbols and 'others' of the collectivity ' (Yuval Davis & Stoetzler 2002:335).

I have argued that beyond archival research marginality was only ever a partial account of circumstance or points out spaces when the familiar became strange. How white mothering interacts with structures of power and how that shaped white women's lives has emerged from narrative accounts. They enabled me to examine new possibilities for thinking about white mothers' positionality. I sketched out social spaces white mothers claimed they occupied and then contrasted those locations with other social groups. Donovan (2003: 708) claims mobility depends on the gendered and sexualised depictions of social actors. However, the findings powerfully demonstrate an ability to navigate borders, to solidify emotional commitments using access pathways and white privilege that was unshakable. White mothers' used interior space to stretch and pull boundaries into new configurations that met their needs as individuals and mothers. As insiders they negotiated privileged access into Black spaces, and their whiteness enabled them to re-negotiate access rights over borders.

An examination of the literature suggests it is the workings of the border that produce the stranger as a particular social type. Boundaries function to define notions of strangeness. This leads Alba (2005:90) to suggest that boundary movement depends to some degree on an individual's approach. If so, to be mixed race would be an advantage; belongings that at first appear ambiguous are in fact fluid and highly mobile identities. However, unlike Alba (2005), I contend ambiguous spaces are too complex and indeterminate to make them knowable and accessible. If boundaries are more or less mutable, the complexity attached to crossings causes significant differential affect. Gate keeping could then be interpreted as contributing to that process, concerned with deliberating what is shared, or acting as a significant source of differentiation.

My critique is that under duress boundary architecture must distinguish transgressive from transformative movement. As documented, research rarely accounts for an insider's role in boundary construction, or the fashioning of boundaries that result. I claim this space for white mothers as users of 'authentic' systems of signification: nationality, gender, class and ethnicity to re-negotiate belonging in new ways. Evidence from the narratives indicates insider, outsider and border-lander represent different opportunities. Complications emerged beyond visible difference and in addition to the geographical borders of place. Britishness was articulated as a shared social and political history, entwined culture, including ethnic food, music and youth culture and middle class aspirations. I do not believe there is sufficient sensitivity to disentangle such complex relationships or attachments at the level necessary to make informed judgments.

Previously, I demonstrated, as makers and markers of the nation, white mothers oscillate between insider and outsider locations. They read these spaces in ways to create or conflate difference dependent upon shifting contexts. I also argued that by straddling both locations they appear to occupy a transformed position. Boundaries have collapsed as discrete borderlines in favour of conjoined and melded zones. This allows for a reconfiguration of borderlands, as swathes of space that can meet a multitude of needs depending on the identities that are inscribed and claimed. As important, in the moment of boundary collapse, difference is rendered ordinary, commonplace and the customary mode of operation, leading essentialism to become a site of strangeness and other. Border zones point to the immense complexities surrounding processes that create difference (Fincher 2007:6).

In borders, I argue that white mothers demonstrate a conjoined status. This questions the status of borders as transitional zones between two discrete spaces, but established a newly configured space. Gina talked about this when describing the black community project that she co-founded. Whereas Sam contrasted a Black Methodist or White Catholic church as two independent and discrete spaces that existed outside mixedness. This suggests that boundaries are reconstructed in ways that allow for what is significant and profound to remain identifiable. White mothers pointed this out in terms of discrete ancestral paths, but additionally crafted out a space for new and innovative belongings. These pathways provided a raft of attachments and opportunities. White mothers have a significant role in determining the location of borderlines as women and parents of free agents. In these circumstances, white mothers believed mixed race young people had more tools at their disposal. Despite an enhanced toolkit, blurred boundaries are less easily navigable as they remain complex and difficult to disentangle.

In light of this, I interpret dislocation as practical state led solutions designed to reconstruct spatial and social distance, by reformatting borderlines that appear to have been crossed. Official material and narratives demonstrate how state organisations, including the family, have been complicit in organised acts of separation. I would include the drive to repatriate mixed children through placement in Black American families, under the notion of 'natural belongings' (Sherwood 1994); and subsuming mixed children within the category Black to avoid attracting attention (Bamuta 1945) as modelling this approach. State encouragement for white mothers to voluntarily place mixed children in the care system, including Transracial Adoption (Kirk 2000), may be examples. The collective did not own the colour problem, they located it in the mixed race families it constructed and imagined, and pushed it elsewhere.

Interrelations of culture, class and gender strengthened their focus on 'tender ties' (Van Kirk 1980). These constitute the social bonds, kinship ties, and emotional connections that endure. Stoler (2001) uses the term 'invisible ties' to emphasise how belonging is articulated through these significant ties and emotional attachments to family, place and nation regardless of physical resemblance. As Beth concluded, the impact that interracial relationships had at home was far less important than might be anticipated. Families just got on with it but did experience contradictory emotions, loyalties and identities. In fact, documenting the everyday 'housekeeping' of mixedness felt strangely conventional, a 'so what' moment. In many ways, the findings from this study, demonstrate the saliency of gender and class as cultural relations at play with the

nation's borders. I continued to grapple with this dilemma. Contributors sensed that difference did exist, but transforming that experience into meaningful language was difficult beyond stereotypical or simplistic accounts. Difference, when articulated through culture, was discussed as a portable set of material goods or innate characteristics. To be clear, difference was identified as more than eating Chicken, Rice and Peas or Jollof Rice, but then had to be sufficiently different to be identifiable. In practical terms the language used to deconstruct racialised difference often resulted in generalization (Blee 2000).

In terms of deepening our understanding of the meanings and experiences of white mothering, I imagined 'crossing over' to open up new possibilities. I began with Brenda's racially mixed marriage in South East London in the 1950s and concluded in Cambridgeshire where in 2009 Natalie gave birth to Jamal, her English/Jamaican son. The ordinariness, common patterns and shared experiences that spanned those years reflect joyous moments, but equally tense family relationships, awkwardness and everyday racisms. This resonated with my own experience as a white mother, but was not my defining experience. 'Our shared experience', beyond citizenship or geography, was contrived and constructed by the collective. Our ghostlike presence, yet silence, had distorted that construction, by suggesting a singular experience. Yet, the stories and experiences of white mothering that I had listened to, did not relate to the rhetoric of those anonymous individuals. In fact, contributors questioned the moral authority of the collective to shape, and then define, a white mothering experience in the absence of informed opinion or consultation.

At outposts there were real consequences in moving beyond the collective. White women's vulnerabilities were exposed but inconsistently ousted. I would argue the limitations of this approach primarily occur as they expose where it is whiteness that appears equally vulnerable. Likewise, white mothers refused to be marginalised. I briefly summarise some of the elements identified through archival research. The concept of abandonment was invoked to demonstrate that the natural outcome of race mixing was loss and disconnection from mainstream society. Women were publicly exhibited in dire circumstances, with no support beyond fragile networks. Equally, the portrayal of white mothers as women of last resort, positioned them as lacking in defence strategies. More significantly, the depiction of white mothers as sexually promiscuous often positioned them as a threat to other families. A mounting onslaught of public humiliation followed. In the narratives, Beth shared her experience of being harassed in a public park. This was an open space where onlookers watched her being racially abused. Rose discussed being humiliated on public transport

by Black women when travelling with her Black partner. To be a white mother is to forfeit the guaranteed protection by white society. Kath gave the strongest account of this where she was targeted by the BNP but received little support from local residents or the police. The police could not always be counted on to intervene in racist incidents and women did not always receive police protection as victims of domestic violence.

At frontier posts white mothers remained influential in the negotiation of borders and refused to be dominated. Despite border resistance, white mothers are emblematic of whiteness and nation in familiar hues. They exercised a right to choose but also carry instability. I reason they use these social identities strategically, alongside a demonstration of social ties, class relations and a shared use of collective systems of signification. Belongings were constrained only by the degree of social support networks, experience of racism and resource they had to draw on. As argued by Anderson (1983) simultaneity strengthens the notion of collective identity that white mothers are then considered to be a part of. Evidence from the narratives indicates that interrelations of gender, class and ethnicity make categorical differences a difficult proposition to sustain. These were not layered components to be peeled back and analysed individually. This is neither what I believe the findings indicate, nor what white mothers advocate.

At interior posts, the biological premise that belonging and identity was a naturally occurring phenomenon remained a strong source of authentication and women read mixed race bodies using these symbols. Where that did not secure automatic belongings, women used insider knowledge to re-negotiate access. They were able to navigate geographical, social and cultural constructions by emphasising varied points of similarity. Collective homogeneity based on a racial or ethnic status alone was unsettled. Anderson (1983) indicates how routine performance gave texture to emblematic systems of signification, in turn re-imagined a nation beyond visible borders. By performing what was shared, along with class aspiration, inferred a common value base and sense of destiny beyond what was immediately visible.

Many feminist writers (Haggis 1998, Klodawsky 2006) have theorised anonymity and invisibility as dimensions of movement that permit women to enter different zones without being challenged. The evidence suggests that whiteness was a vehicle to achieve that. Meaning mothers were less likely to have their authority or judgements challenged, if they were alone (Morrison 2004:388). Women used the privilege of belonging, rooted in succession rights, cultural links and emotional attachments, to contest exclusion based on the superficial and

immediately visible. White mothers retraced the contours of Englishness alongside other group members, actions that somewhat surprised white mothers, such as Rebecca's discussion of The Royal Family. Morality, parenting, monogamy and marriage were all considered sufficiently important collective values to warrant support in gatekeeping. Veronica gave an example of this in terms of policing local relationships, and Gina did through her withdrawal from the community project where standards were falling. These actions demonstrated an ongoing commitment and re-established connections with fellow members. Class, culture and ethnic identity were important in this regard, but were not always successful.

The interaction of Race and Class with Place

The impact on mixedness of living in an urban or suburban space has not been fully reflected in research. To explore this tension, I revisited white mothers role in border interaction and re-negotiation. I do not believe that white mothers were concerned with breaking down barriers but more conscious of their role in constructing them. Location was a prominent factor in all the narratives but there was no clear pattern in women's choice to move to rural, urban or suburban residencies. I argue the assumption that mixed children will feel less isolated within multiracial areas was not borne out by the narratives. Tracey and Brenda moved out of London to give their children a better chance amongst green spaces and shires. However, the interaction of class, race and place, make those assumptions less easily sustained. Women, like Lynda, presupposed by sacrificing a cultural mix she would secure improved educational opportunities, lower levels of crime and increased personal safety.

Where Laura discussed a successful return to her childhood home she reflects re-established family networks and business connections that offered advantage. Laura challenged the idea that her move away from a working class neighbourhood in North London into a middle class village resulted from her family's mixed status. Laura felt disadvantaged in terms of the opportunities the location offered. Chris experienced high levels of racism in South West England and moved to North London to achieve security. Melissa sensed the future lay in global landscapes and moved into the city to enhance her quality of life and to maximise on proximity to a range of cultural resources. Equally, for some of the contributors, selecting a multicultural or socially segregated neighbourhood was not a matter of choice. One view was, that belonging would not be challenged as a child and/or partner's ethnicity would stand out less within a city.

I reason the interaction of ethnicity and place also provided the potential for a multiplicity of identities. Meaning a context can determine relations between different elements of difference. Sonia's son may claim nationality, being Irish in England as a mode of belonging. Attending a Catholic school, having regular contact with grandparents in Ireland and an Irish passport support that identity claim. In Ireland, national identity may act as a unifying or externalising factor where Englishness or a mixed ethnicity is symbolic of other. In England a London identity may be claimed. What Hickman (2005) identified is being local is a category to avoid identification with Englishness or Britishness. Regardless of location, the majority of white mothers felt able to inscribe place with a protective mantle of invisibility and anonymity that they manipulated to benefit their family

I acknowledge imaginings may differ substantially between a parent and child, or within peer groups. The study has focused on white females construction of Black males, so represents a particular view. Notwithstanding this skewed view, ethnic identification was discussed as an elaborate process of layering. The strength of a partner's family connections, physiognomy, vernacular, class, culture and residential location, impacted on the degree by which ethnic categories were considered valuable. Commonly, they were used to problematize the notion of orderly differences. Visibility, class, culture and ethnicity were equated in some contexts, but set apart at other times. Significantly, it was not a partner's blackness that occupied a space of strangeness, but differing attachments to place and reserved histories. Disjuncture emerged within particular contexts as being more or less significant. Brenda talked about some of these difficulties as a loss of privacy and control in how homespace was used.

The findings indicate that even if, or when, white mothers sense that boundary architecture is shifting, they may not be in a position to navigate or control where borderlines will form. Arguably the fallout can be difficult to manage. Brenda's account of homespace as an intimate private zone or social hub for black males friends acts as one example. In the case of white mothers, gendered constructions of maleness are as equally distorted as racialised constructions of blackness and combine in strange ways. Nonetheless, by operating across dimensions, synergistic qualities re-instate boundaries in advantageous positions, or restate value through legitimate means but in ways that defy their original location. The capacity to re-negotiate borderlines, leads to a heaping of relations of difference into a single site, promoting continuities rather than radical breaks.

This leads me to return to Balibar's (1995:96) notion of fictive ethnicity, in that belongings are positioned as representative of a pre-existing and natural community. Ideas seem natural, not fixed; boundaries are there but ambiguously defined. Brenda would sense disjuncture on cultural and racial grounds, where origins, culture and interests, were said to transcend individuals and were considered immanent in its people. To reiterate, nations hail the significance of bloodlines, birthright and geographical territories to extol a particular version of belonging that has a secure legitimacy. Yet, in most cases, this is exactly what white mothers undertook to do. Belonging was performed through familial ties and networks, birthplace and citizenship rights. In supporting the key terms of membership criteria, white mothers may not even question their status. Equally, they may select a national identity, as a unifying framework for disparate belongings.

Sonia gave an example of that where she considered Irish passports for her Nigerian husband and mixed race son. I interpret this as levelling the playing field. In the London household, each family member shares the status of foreigner. To some degree, I am suggesting nation and ethnicity infer softer boundaries, making transgressive acts more obvious or more easily hidden. Whereas, whiteness, gender and class combine in contradictory ways, making border management erratic and tricky. This notion of contingency suggests an irrational response to white women that are neither systematic nor consistently applied, but one that is rooted in racist imaginings and patriarchal conquest. This may account for the periodic outing of white mothers. In terms of children, white mothering manipulated signification systems, where possible, to claim authentic belongings across different contexts. In terms of collective process, the production of strangeness emerged when sexual intimacy occurred with an[other. This represented a transgressive act.

Conclusion:

Postmodern concepts of fluidity, situational identities, and transformation have not been a feature of research strategies that discuss white mothers or mixed children's experience. I theorise white mother's ability to manoeuvre and transform boundaries in light of the resources they possess and what they consider is meaningful. As opposed to spoiled collective members or passive boundary markers, I position white mothers as creative and active agents of change. Drawing on Williams (1958), I conceive of white women's boundary acts as conduits between old and new, constructing ranges of possibilities in different locations; not all of which will be inhabited. What is familiar and what is strange straddles a number of collectivities. Natalie at 17 claimed Reggae music to be as

much a part of her British heritage as her partners. Whereas, visiting home for a formal English Sunday Lunch left Penny feeling cold. Narrative illustrates how white mothers made the strange, strangely familiar and everyday, or discounted elements they considered to add little value.

In this thesis, I have interrogated the complex relationships that white mothering demands. Drawing from qualitative research, I disrupted the notion of transgressive behaviours and marginal identities. By adopting a fresh interpretative framework I firmly locate white mothers as insiders contesting racialised labels and disrupting what Mahanti calls dominant social scripts (Mahanti 2002: 425). In new zones belonging to more than one group gave space for mixedness to blossom and demonstrate connectedness. Whilst nation tries to reassess and establish what it would like to be, white mothers are busy expressing an array of belongings. The question is where they choose to locate belonging. This is determined by how the nation imagines itself and establishes social process to support that view, against how successful women are in transforming the nation.

A significant change in the past decade has been the transformation of classificatory systems. In 2001, mixed race became a formal category in the UK Census. Irrespective of political view, this will prompt a significant shift in the discourse as white mothers have legitimacy to parent a 'mixed child' that was previously denied to them. In Aspinall (2003) singular categories reflect a turning point that closes down on the either, or, options previously available. How the collective will respond to unambiguous identities and what that might mean for national belongings will be an exciting arena to watch. The findings suggest that white mothers already conceive of mixed race as a legitimate category, not bound by racialised constructs but enabled through expansive spaces and increased opportunities. White mothering lays the foundations for an expression of familiar and new meanings and carves out opportunities for children to perform in multiple, dynamic and racialised social spaces (Mahanti 2002).